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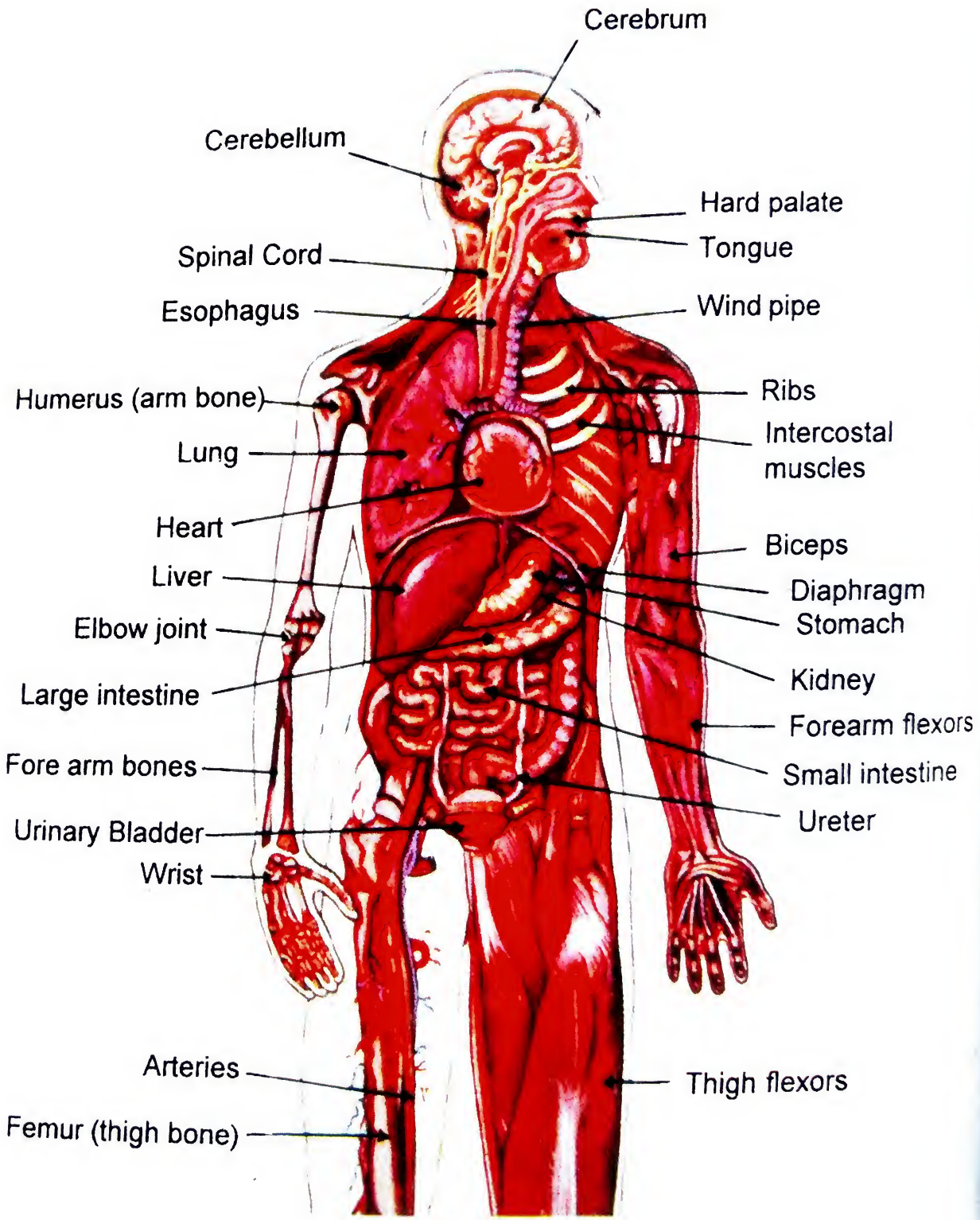
YOGA

ĀSANAS • PRĀṆĀYĀMA • MUDRĀS • KRIYĀS

VIVEKANANDA KENDRA PRAKASHAN


Cerebrum
Cerebellum
Hard palate
Tongue
Spinal Cord
Esophagus
Wind pipe
Humerus (arm bone)
Ribs
Intercostal muscles
Lung
Heart
Biceps
Liver
Diaphragm
Stomach
Elbow joint
Kidney
Large intestine
Forearm flexors
Fore arm bones
Small intestine
Ureter
Urinary Bladder
Wrist
Arteries
Thigh flexors
Femur (thigh bone)

YOGA

An Instruction Booklet

Vivekananda Kendra Prakashan Trust
Chennai

INTRODUCTION

Swami Vivekananda proclaimed 'each soul is potentially Divine. The goal is to manifest this Divinity within, by controlling Nature – external and internal. Do it either by work or worship, psychic control or philosophy; by one or more, or all of these and be free.' The systematic methodology of unfoldment of this inner potential Divinity, by moving towards Self-perfection is referred to as Yoga by Sri Aurobindo. Yoga is thus a process by which the Animal-man ascends through the stages Man-man, Super-man and the Divine-man. In this process, the limited, narrow, selfish thinking completely changes and takes the shape of an integrated, all-encompassing, selfless character expressed by equanimity. This state of Divinity or Self-perfection is the state of pure consciousness, maximum creativity and bliss. Hence, the movement towards THAT through Yoga is a delightful, blissful process. Since every individual or society is always striving to achieve greater happiness, bliss, creativity and higher mental faculties, Yoga clearly is the real solution, both for individual fulfilment and social harmony.

Divergent are the methods of Yoga. Unless one sees the underlying unity and harmony, one is apt to lose track amidst diversities. Once the insight into the "Unity in Diversity" develops, the truth about the comprehensive nature of Yoga emerges. This central note of harmony was emphatically sounded in the speeches of Swami Vivekananda. He called for men with muscles of iron and nerves of steel. Sri Aurobindo

laid stress on a comprehensive growth of personality, at the physical, mental, intellectual, emotional and spiritual levels. The present courses on Yogic practices offered by the Kendra are tailored for an all round development of the physical, mental and vital components of man.

First, some loosening and stretching exercises called Śithilīkāraṇa Vyāyāma are introduced which helps to make the body supple and flexible so that they aid in Āsanas that are designed to conserve the energies and transform them to subtle forms of mental energies. The Āsanas also provide a means to develop an inner awareness thus aiding in calming down the mind. The Cleansing Techniques, ''Kriyās'' help to bring about a balanced functioning of the body, thereby purifying the subtle 'Nāḍīs'. These techniques prepare the individual for practising Prāṇāyāma, Mudrās and Bandhas.

This booklet of instruction introduces only some of the aspects mentioned above and is by no means exhaustive. While it covers no theoretical ground, the material is purely instructive in nature meant to help people in the practice of loosening exercises, Kriyās, Āsanas, Prāṇāyāma, Mudrās and Bandhas. Through these practices one gets a preparatory training for pursuing higher techniques leading to states of increasing harmony and bliss.

PRAYERS

ॐ सह नाववतु । सह नौ भुनक्तु । सह वीर्यं करवावहै ।
तेजस्वि नावधीतमस्तु । मा विद्विषावहै ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Saha nāvavatu, Saha nou Bhunaktu, Saha viryamkaravavahai,
Tejasvi nāvadhitamastu. Mā Vidviṣāvahai,
Om Śāntiḥ Śantiḥ Śantiḥ.

"May He protect us both. May He nourish us both. May we both work together with great energy. May our study be enlightening and fruitful. May we never hate each other. Om Peace Peace Peace."

प्राणस्येदं वशे सर्वं त्रिदिवे यत् प्रतिष्ठितम् ।
मातेव पुत्रान् रक्षस्व श्रीश्च प्रज्ञां च विधेहि न इति ॥

Prāṇasyedam vaśe sarvam tridive yat Pratiṣṭhitam
Māteva putrān Rakṣasva śrīśca prajñām ca Vidhehi na iti.

(Praśnopaniṣad - 2:13)

All this (in this world), as also all that in heaven are under the control of Prāṇa. Protect us just as a mother does her sons, and ordain for us splendour and intelligence.

योगेन चित्तस्य पदेन वाचां मलं शरीरस्य च वैद्यकेन ।
योऽपाकरोत्तं प्रवरं मुनीनां पतञ्जलिं प्राञ्जलिरानतोऽस्मि ॥

Yogena cittasya padena vācām
malam śarīrasya ca vaidyakena
Yo'pākarottam pravaram munīnām
Patañjalim prāñjalirānato'smi

I offer my salutations with folded hands to Patanjali, the renowned amongst the sages, who removed the impurity of mind through Yoga, of the speech by Grammar and of the body by Āyurveda.

CHAPTER 1

ŚITHILĪKARAṆA VYĀYĀMA
शिथिलीकरण व्यायाम

(Loosening Exercises)

1. JOGGING

* Stand erect and place the fists loosely on the chest. Start skipping on the toes and touching the heels at the back in a relaxed way.
* Increase the speed gradually and come to a steady jogging speed.
* Carry on deep rhythmic breathing and relax the whole body during jogging. Continue for a while.
* Switch over to the forward jogging by raising the knees to the chest level. Repeat for a while.
* Continue the practice with side jogging by spreading the legs sidewards and raising the heels upwards by bending the knees. Stand a while and perform Mukha Dhouti. Relax in standing position (Tāḍāsana).

2. MUKHA DHOUTI (मुख धौति) (CLEANSING THROUGH A SINGLE BLAST BREATH)

* Stand with a slight forward bend of the trunk, palms on the thighs and legs about a metre apart.

* Inhale deeply and expel the air forcibly as in a jet through the mouth continuously. This is effected by the help of the diaphragm by prolonged exhalation.
* Repeat several times.

3. LOOSENING OF ANKLE JOINTS

* Stand erect.
* Raise and stretch up both hands from front while inhaling.
* Balance on the toes.
* Bring down the hands and feet while exhaling.

4. LOOSENING OF KNEE JOINTS

* Stand erect with hands straight down. Inhale completely.
* Breathe out through the mouth while going down by bending the knee-joints and keeping them together.
* Keep the body straight without bending at the waist.
* Come up while inhaling.

5. LOOSENING OF HIP JOINTS

* Inhale while standing erect.
* With knees far apart, but heels almost touching each other, sit down while exhaling.
* Balance on the toes and sit on the heels.
* Try to push the knees apart by the palms.
* Breathe in, while getting up.

6. PĀDA SAÑCĀLANA (पाद सञ्चालन)

* Stand erect but relaxed, with hands along the body.

* Bring the right leg forward without bending the knees while inhaling. Stay in the position for a few seconds.

* Return to the standing position while exhaling.

* Take the right leg backwards (inhale). Without bending the knee-joint, stay in the position for a few seconds.

* Return to the original position (exhale).

* Raise the right leg sidewards to the right with hip-joint as the hinge point (inhale). The leg is kept straight. Stay in the position for a few seconds.

* Return to the original position (exhale).

* Raise the right leg sidewards to the left with hip-joint as the hinge point (inhale). The leg is kept straight. Stay in the position for a few seconds.

* Return to the vertical position (exhale).

* Repeat the complete set of movements with the left leg.

7 FRONT AND BACK BENDING OF WAIST

* While inhaling, stretch up the hands and bend backwards.

* Return to the vertical position and bend forward while exhaling.

* Touch the ground with palms, if possible. Come up and bend backwards during inhalation. Repeat 4 or 5 times. With practice, you can touch the ground at the back with hands as in Cakrāsana and come up.

8 SIDE BENDING AND TWISTING OF WAIST

(a) *Side bending*

* Keep the legs about a metre apart.

* Raise the hands sideways parallel to the ground while inhaling.

* Bend to the right till the right hand touches the right heel while exhaling. Bend in the same plane.

* Look at the palm of the left hand directing forwards. Come up with inhalation. Repeat 4 or 5 times.

* Repeat the same on the left.

(b) *Twist with bending*

* Repeat (a), except that the right foot is touched with the left hand and left foot with the right hand.

(c) *Twist*

* Stand erect with hands spread out parallel to the ground, feet about ½ metre apart.

* Keeping the legs firm on the ground twist to the right, right hand straight and left hand bent at the elbow touching the chest.

* Exhale continuously during this twist.

* Come back while inhaling.

* Repeat on the left side.

* All twisting should be above the waist. Below the waist, maintain the body straight and firm. No bending at the knee-joints.

* Repeat with increasing speed.

9. ROTATION FOR SHOULDER-JOINTS

* Stand erect but relaxed, arms along the body.

* Take the right hand back and up. Rotate in anti-clockwise direction.

* Gradually increase the speed of rotation. Return to original position.

* Rotate the right hand-front, up, back and down. Inhale as hand goes up and exhale as hand is brought down.

* Repeat the rotations in reverse order also back, up, front and down.

* Repeat with left hand.

* Repeat with both hands together.

10 NECK-EXERCISES

* Stand in Tadasana. Hold right wrist with the left hand at the back.
* Bend your neck to the front and to the back. Relax neck muscles.
* Bend your neck to the right and to the left. Relax neck muscles.
* Stretch to the right and to the left (look to the right and left)
* Rotate the neck from right to left and left to right alternately.
* Do the above practices carefully, slowly and gently, each practice 5 times

11 TIGER-STRETCH

* Rest on the palms and the knees. No bending at the elbow-joint. Keep the heels apart.
* Bring the head inwards flexing the spine up while exhaling fast through the mouth (spine convex).
* While inhaling and raising the hand up, arch the spine towards the floor (concave upwards).
* Repeat and increase the speed gradually.
* Lie down on the abdomen, rest the chest on the ground and relax completely.
* If all movements are done slowly, synchronizing with slow and deep breathing, it is known as Tiger breathing.

12 BACK-STRETCH

* Rest on the toes and palms. Jump backwards keeping the hands straight give a concave shape to the spine. Stretch the body forward and look up. Inhale. Keep the feet together.
* Jump forward to bring the feet between the palms. Keep the palms firm on the ground. Exhale completely in this sitting position.
* Jump backwards.
* Start slowly and increase the speed. Repeat by jumping forwards and backwards about 15 times.

13 BREATHING EXERCISES

Breathing Exercises done at the beginning of the Yoga practices help in slowing down the breath rate, thereby inducing a deep relaxation. They develop awareness of breathing through the movements of different parts of the body. Close your eyes as you do them and be aware of your inner sensations. Always breathe out over a longer time than you breathe in, synchronizing your breathing and movements. Note how you become calmer as your breathing slows.

Special tips : First emphasize the movement of hands and abdominal or thoracic muscles as needed in each exercise. Correct the movements. Use "in" and "out" instructions loudly for inhalation and exhalation. Check and correct the synchronization of breathing with the corresponding movements. As progress is made, close the eyes and practise.

(a) Hands in and out breathing

* Stand erect. Bring up the arms to horizontal position, palms pressing each other, fingers pointing forward.
* Move the arms backwards as much as possible while inhaling. The arms swing back with shoulders as hinges in the same horizontal plane. Chest is expanded.
* Bring the arms back to front position while exhaling fully. Repeat 10 rounds.

(b) Hands-stretch breathing

* Interlock the fingers, in front of the chest, palms inwards.
* Inhale slowly, stretch the arms straight out while twisting the interlocked hands, palms facing outwards.

* Exhale. Bring the hands back. Palms on the chest with relaxation. Repeat 10 times.

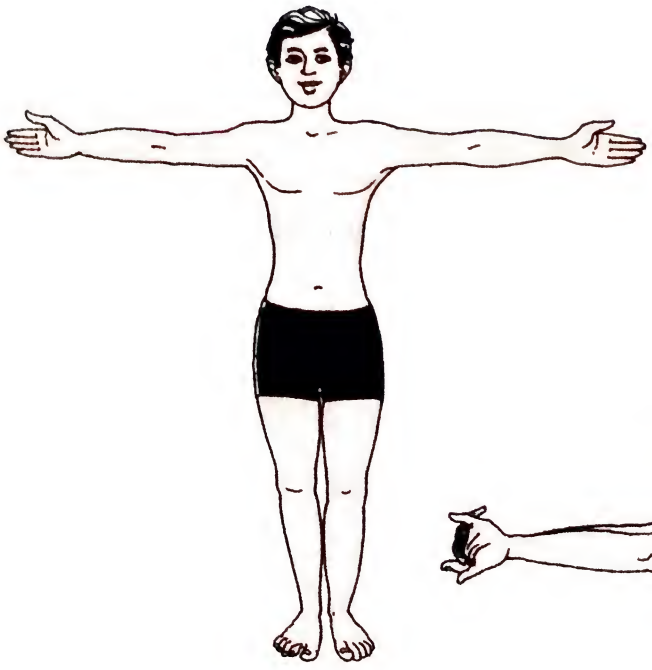
* Repeat the same movements in oblique (45°) and vertical planes.

(c) *Ankle-stretch breathing*

* Stand erect. Keep the hands straight down, palms facing forward.

* While inhaling, raise the hands and stretch up the body on the toes. The hands and the arms stretched upwards.

* While exhaling bring the hands down completely retracing the steps. Stand on the soles. Repeat 5 times.



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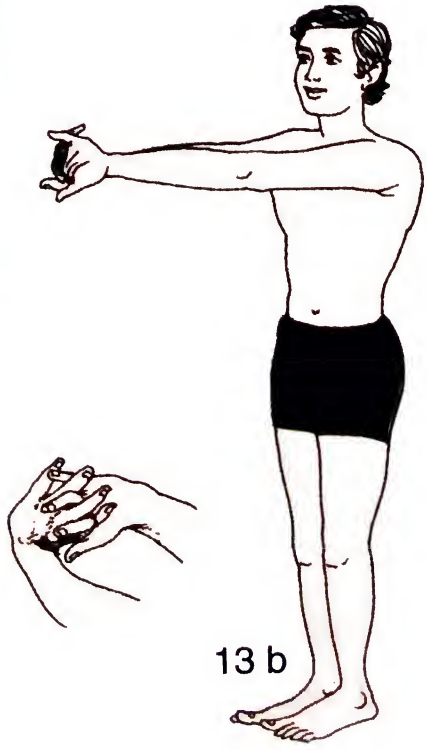

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CHAPTER 2

KRIYĀS

क्रिया

(CLEANSING TECHNIQUES)

MAJOR KRIYĀS

The six processes (ṣaṭ kriyās – षट् क्रिया) which purify the system are :

Kapālabhāti, Neti, Dhouti, Nauli, Trāṭaka and Basti.

These six Kriyās are discussed in detail in different Yoga texts like Haṭha Pradīpika.

We will briefly describe the first five only :

1 KAPĀLABHĀTI, कपालभाति (STIMULATING THE BRAIN CELLS)

* Sit comfortably in Padmāsana with an erect spine.
* Exhale forcibly using abdominal muscles.
* Inhale passively by relaxing the abdominal muscles.
* Repeat as quickly as possible starting with 60 strokes per minute and increasing gradually upto 120 per minute.
* There is no holding of the breath.
* The rapid active exhalations with passive effortless inhalations are accomplished by

flapping movements of the abdomen. At the end of the minute there is an automatic cessation of breath. Enjoy the deep silence of mind associated with this.

*** This kriyā washes out the carbon dioxide from the blood, activates the brain cells, cleans the air passages and stimulates the abdominal organs.

2 NETI नेति (CLEANING THE NASAL PASSAGES)

Four types of "Neti" are in general practice, namely: Jala Neti, Sūtra Neti, Dugdha Neti and Ghṛta Neti.

A. Jala Neti (जल नेति) :

Add about half a tea-spoon of salt to a Neti-pot- ful of luke-warm water.

* Hold the pot in the right hand.
* Insert the nozzle of the pot into the right nostril.
* Keep the mouth open to allow free breathing through the mouth.
* Tilt the head first slightly backwards, then forwards and sidewards to the left, so that the water from the pot enters the right nostril and

comes out through the left by gravity. Allow the flow till the pot is empty.

* Repeat the same on the left side.

* Blast out the air accumulated in both the nostrils by active exhalations through alternate nostrils as in Kapālabhāti to clean the nasal passages of the remaining water.

* By slightly bending the head back, the water goes to mouth which can be swallowed after washing the passages of nostrils. This is called ''Uṣaḥ pāna'' which can be practised early morning before sunrise with beneficial effects.

B. *Sūtra Neti* **or *Rubber Catheter Neti* (सूत्र नेति)**

* Insert the blunt end of a thin soft rubber catheter from the front horizontally in the right nostril.

* Push it along the floor of the nose until the tip is felt in the back of the throat.

* Insert the right index and the middle fingers through the mouth and catch the tip of the catheter at the back of the throat.

* Put it out through the mouth and gently massage the nasal passage by catching the two ends of the tube.

* Remove the catheter through the nose.

* Repeat on the left side.

C. *Dugdha Neti* and *Ghṛta Neti* (दुग्ध नेति एवं घृत नेति)

Here milk and ghee are used respectively in place of water as in Jala Neti.

D. *Vyutkrama Kapāla Neti* (व्युत्क्रम कपाल नेति)

This is similar to Jala Neti, with the difference that the water comes out of mouth instead of through the opposite nostril.

E. *Sītkrama Kapāla Neti* (सीत्क्रम कपाल नेति)

* Take a mouthful of luke-warm saline water.

* Bend forward and relax the soft palate so that the water comes out of the nose.

Neti Kriyā is to be followed by a few rounds of Kapālabhāti, so as to keep the nasal passage clear.

Neti, in general, purifies most structures in the head and neck. Neti not only clears the nasal passages but also renders the nose resistant to many irritants like water, cotton, rubber, ghee, milk etc. Hence it is very helpful in removing the hypersensitivity as seen in persons suffering from allergic rhinitis. Vision becomes more subtle.

3 DHOUTI धौति (CLEANSING THE INTESTINAL TRACT UPTO THE STOMACH)

* There are 3 types of Dhouti Kriyas. They are Jala Dhouti or Vamana Dhouti, Vastra Dhouti and Daṇḍā Dhouti. We will briefly describe them.

A. *Jala Dhouti* or *Vamana Dhouti* (जल धौति/वमन धौति)

* Sit on heels, and drink luke-warm saline water till you can take no more, or till you feel like vomiting it out.

* Churn the stomach by twisting exercise. (1.8)

- Stand with feet together and trunk bent forward forming an angle of about 90° and vomit.
- Now with the help of the middle three fingers tickle the back of the throat to vomit out (Vamana) all the water.
- Repeat the process of tickling, till no more water comes out, which means that almost all water had been vomited. This Kriyā is also called as Kuñjal.
- With continued practice, one can stimulate the vomiting sensation and vomit out the water without using the fingers at the throat. Further practice can lead to a continuous vomiting of all the water through the mouth, as if it is coming in a jet. This resembles the water-jet that comes out of the trunk of an elephant and as such is termed "Gajakaraṇī".

B. *Vastra Dhouti* **(वस्त्र धौति)**

- Slowly swallow a wet piece of cloth four fingers broad and about 7 metres long under the guidance of an instructor or a Guru.
- Slowly bring out the cloth without forcibly pulling it. This process is called Vastra Dhouti.

If the vastra tends to get stuck up, drink some water to release the spasm.

C. *Daṇḍā Dhouti* **(दंडा धौति)**

- Drink luke-warm saline water as in Vamana Dhouti.
- Take a rubber tube (Daṇḍā) about 1 cm. in diameter and about a metre long.
- Slowly place one end of the tube and push it down the gullet into the stomach. When it reaches the stomach, slowly bend forward. All the water will come out by syphon action. Suck in and bulge out the stomach, if necessary. Remove the tube gently.

These Kriyās should be performed early in the

morning preferably before dawn and after clearing the bowels.

*** Dhouti Kriyā is extremely useful for gas trouble, high acidity in stomach and for curing Asthma also.

4 NAULI नौली (CONTROL OF THE ABDOMINAL RECTI)

Nauli is an abdominal Kriyā, in which isolation and rolling manipulation of the abdominal rcti muscles (rectus abdominis) which form the front linear wall of the abdominal cavity, are accomplished.

A. Uḍḍīyāna (उड्डीयान)

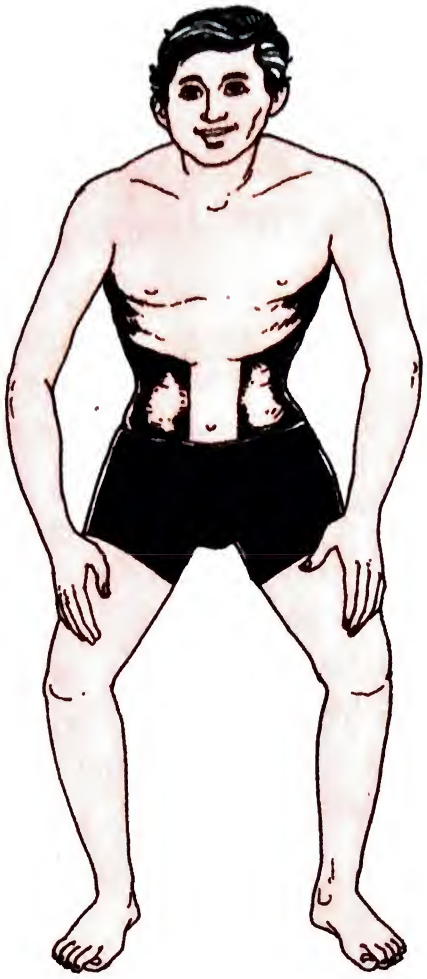
* Stand with a slight forward bend of the trunk, palms on the thighs and legs about a metre apart.

* Exhale completely by vigorously contracting the muscles of the abdomen. Chest also gets contracted.

* Press the hands against the thighs (thus fixing up the muscles of the neck and the shoulders) and have vigorous mock-inhalation by raising the ribs without allowing air to flow into the lungs.

* Relax the muscles of the abdomen. Automatically the diaphragm will rise up producing a concave depression of the abdomen. This is called Uḍḍīyāna.

* In this 'breathe-out condition' push-out and pull-in the abdominal muscles fast. Continue until the ''breathe-out condition'' lasts. Count the number of flappings. This process is called Agnisāra Kriyā (अग्निसार क्रिया). This Kriyā tones up the digestive system by continued stimulations.



B. Madhyama Nauli (मध्यम नौलि)

* Maintaining Uḍḍīyāna, give a forward and downward push to the abdominal point just above the pelvic bone in the mid-line, where the two recti originate. This push brings about the contraction of these muscles which stand out in the centre, leaving the other muscles of the abdominal wall in a relaxed condition. This is Madhyama Nauli (Middle Nauli).

C. Dakṣina and Vāma nauli (दक्षिण एवं वाम नौलि)

* For Dakṣiṇa (right) Nauli, one has to contract the right rectus a lone leaving the other muscles including the left rectus relaxed.

* For Vāma (left) Nauli, only left rectus is contracted leaving the others relaxed.

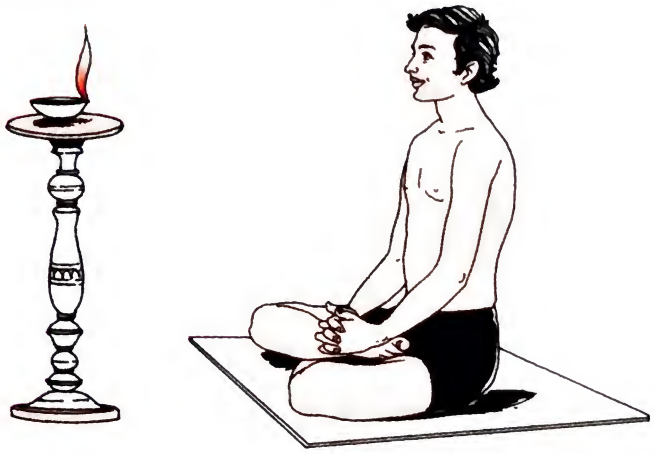
D. Nauli Cālana (नौलि चालन)

* When one has gained full control over these three types of Nauli, rolling of the recti muscles

clockwise and anti-clockwise is practised. This is called "Nauli Cālana".

BENEFITS : A very fine Kriyā for promoting the health of the abdominal viscera. The autonomic nerve centres and the endocrine glands in the abdomen are all activated. Due to the negative pressure created in the abdomen the circulation to the abdominal organs improves enormously, stimulates gastric fire, thus helping digestion.

5 *Trāṭaka* त्राटक *(Fixing the Mind)*



* Sit in any meditative posture - Padmāsana, Vajrāsana etc., comfortably with an erect spine.

Arrange a lightened lamp with the flame at the same height as the eyes at a distance of about a metre.

* Start gazing at the flame without winking the eye-lids.

* Learn to ignore the irritation and watering of the eyes.

* With practice, the gaze becomes steady, making the mind single-pointed.

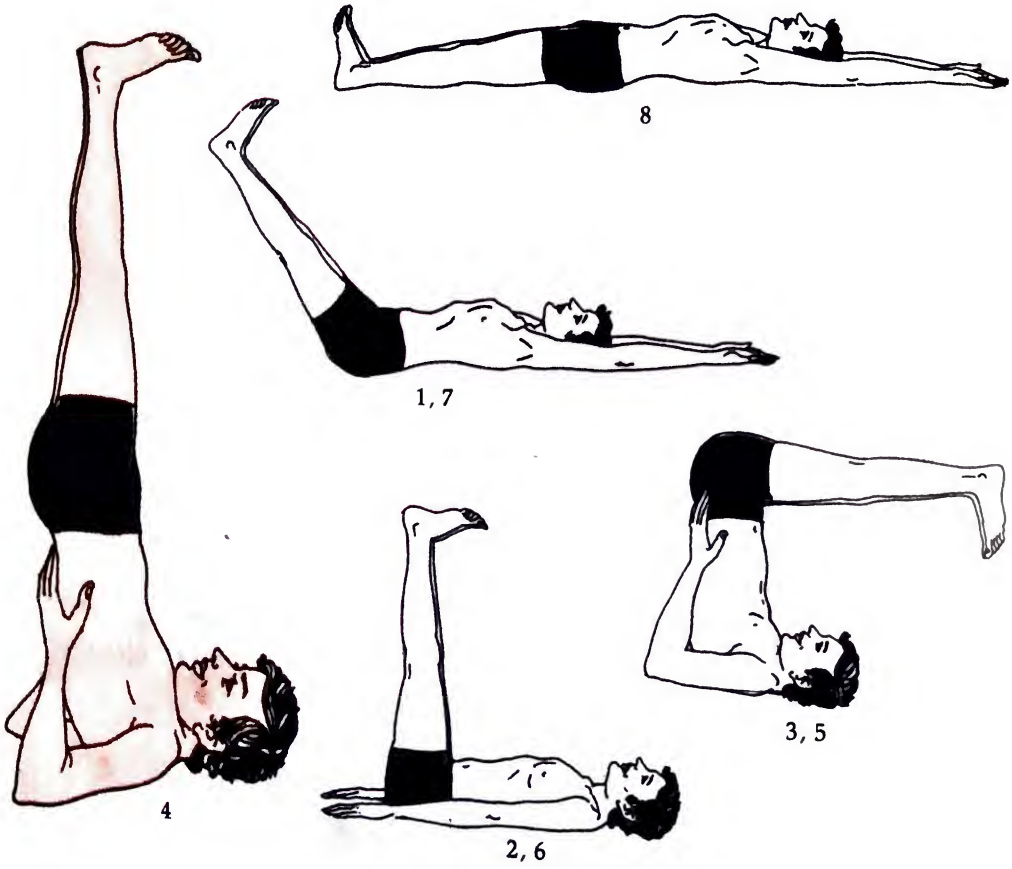
Relaxation of the eyes is important. Otherwise, excessive strain of the eye muscles may cause headache.

* Progress slowly starting with 10 secs. and

increasing the duration by 10 secs. per week.

*** This cleansing process activates the tear glands, purifies the visual system, promotes good concentration and strengthens will-power. Generally it cures the eye defects, if done properly.

6 VIPARĪTAKARAṆĪ KRIYĀ विपरीतकरणी
(CLEANSING IN INVERTED POSTURE)



* Lie supine on the ground over the blanket, with arms stretched above the head.

1. Raise the legs together to 45° keeping the knees straight.
2. Raise further to 90°.
3. Now raise the buttocks and the trunk, by supporting the body with the palms at the waist, to take the weight on the arms and elbows.
4. Come to final position with body at 45° to the

ground and the legs vertical.

5. Perform forcible exhalations as in Kapālabhāti Kriyā, start with 10 strokes and gradually increase the number of strokes.

* Come down slowly and relax.

* This Kriyā stimulates the abdominal organs toning them up. Very effective for persons suffering from abdominal disorders and diabetes.

7 ŚAṄKHAPRAKṢĀLANA KRIYĀ शंखप्रक्षालन क्रिया (COMPLETE BOWEL-WASH)

* Drink slowly about half a litre of luke-warm saline water.

* Perform dynamic exercises in the following order:

1. Walking on toes with heels raised and hands lifted up.
2. Twisting of the waist 3 times each side.
3. Bhujaṅgasana 3 times.
4. Sūryanamaskāra position 7 twisting towards left and right alternately 3 times each side.
5. Ardha Matsyendrāsana 3 times.
6. Pavana Muktāsana.
7. Udara karṣaṇāsana (उदर कर्षणासन)

* Sit on the heels, legs a little apart, as we sit in the lavatory for excretion.

* Turn the right leg with right sole as the hinge, such that the right knee touches the ground by the left side of the left foot. Twist the whole body, especially the stomach muscles.

* Return to original position.

* Repeat the process with the left leg and a fine twist to the right. Return.

* Repeat 3 times on each side.

If a sensation to excrete is there, go to the toilet and empty the bowel.

* Drink about ½ litre of water again and perform the same series of exercises.

* Repeat 3 or 4 times until you get the sensation.

Sometimes if there is no sensation of excretion even after 3 or 4 repetitions, Cakrāsana is performed. This helps to push out the excreta more effectively.

* After excretion again drink about the same quantity of water and repeat the exercises.

* Empty the bowel. This time the motion would be thinner and would come out with yellowish water.

* Repeat till mere water comes out.

* Relax completely in Śavāsana for at least an hour. During this period small quantities of water may get emptied from the stomach a few times.

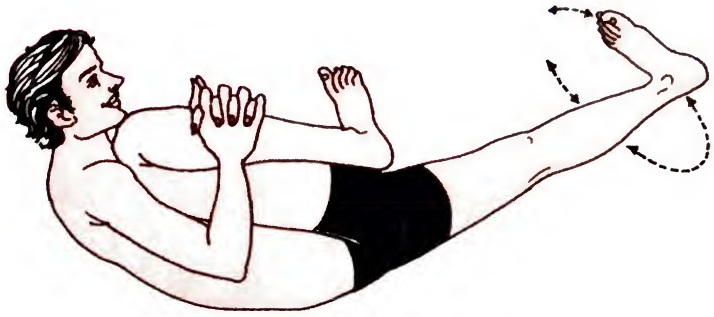
* Eat Khicaḍī (rice and dhal boiled together preferably without salt) with about 4-6 teaspoonful pure ghee. Leave about an hour after Śavāsana. No spices or hard food should be taken for the next 12 hours.

* As this Kriyā is exhausting because of the vigorous exercises involved and complete washing out of the juices, a complete day's rest is beneficial and almost essential first time. After the process is learnt, this Kriyā is to be performed only once or twice in a year.

*** This complete wash of the bowel clears all the waste products in the bowel. Śaṅkha-Prakṣālana revitalises all the glands in the intestinal tract. Helps in overcoming the Tamas (laziness). When performed under guidance, it is useful in treating chronic disorders of the large intestine.

8. PAVANA MUKTĀSANA KRIYĀ (पवनमुक्तासन) (WIND RELEASING TECHNIQUE)

A. *Type 1*



* Sthiti : Lie supine on the ground over the blanket, heels together, arms stretched above the head.

* Sthiti represents the starting position to be assumed before the āsana.

1. Raise the right leg keeping it straight to about 45° from the ground. Keep the left leg firmly on the ground. Inhale partially.

2. Place the right leg perpendicular to the ground; complete inhalation.

3. Bend the right leg and press the knees over the chest by holding the legs by interlocked fingers of the hands. Exhale.

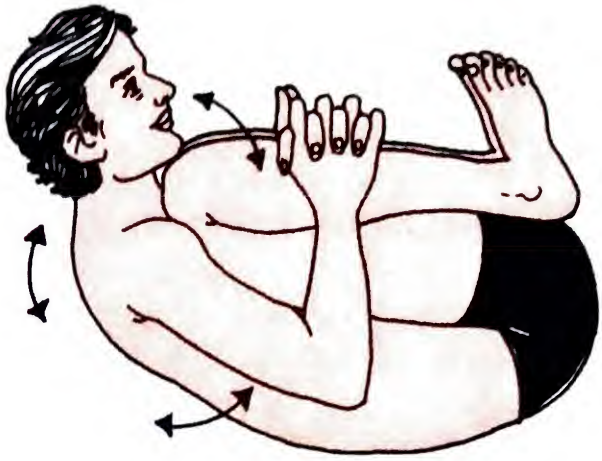
4. Take the chin above the knees. Rotate the left leg in an elliptical fashion 5 times in the clockwise direction and 5 times in the anticlockwise direction. Normal breathing.

* Return to Sthiti position through 5 to 8.

* Repeat with the left leg.

B. Type 2

* Start from Sthiti position.



1. Take both legs to 45° position; keep the knees straight. Inhale slowly.
2. Bring the legs perpendicular to the ground; complete inhalation.
3. Bend the knees, press them on to the chest by the hands with interlocked fingers. Exhale. Take the chin above the knees.
4. (a) Take the chin above the knees. Roll the body to the right until the right elbow touches the ground.

   Roll back to the left till the left elbow touches the ground. Repeat this sideward rolling 5 times.

   (b) Rock the body forwards and backwards about 5 times; normal breathing.

* Return to "Sthiti" through 5 to 8.

BENEFITS : The movements coupled with the posture of the body in Pavana Muktāsana help to remove the gaseous accumulations in the stomach, increase the digestive power and remove constipation.

CHAPTER 3

YOGĀSANAS
योगासन

1 SŪRYANAMASKĀRA सूर्यनमस्कार
(SALUTATIONS TO SUN)

Sūryanamaskāra combines Yogāsanas and Prāṇāyāma. As such, it comes in between Śithilīkaraṇa Vyāyāma and Yogāsanas and brings about the general flexibility of the body preparing it for further Āsanas and Prāṇāyāma. This is usually done both at sunrise and sunset, facing the Sun, after chanting the following verse:

हिरण्मयेन पात्रेण सत्यस्यापिहितं मुखम् ।
तत् त्वं पूषन् अपावृणु सत्यधर्माय दृष्टये ॥ (Īśa. Up. 15)

Hiraṇmayena Pātreṇa Satyasyāpihitam Mukham,
Tat tvam Pūṣan Apāvṛṇu Satya-dharmāya Dṛṣṭaye ||

Like a lid to a vessel, O Sun, your
Golden orb covers the entrance to Truth.
Kindly open the entrance, to lead me to Truth.

There are mainly 2 modes of performing Sūryanamaskāra. In one, there are 12 steps or counts and in the other only 10 in each round. Each round of Sūryanamaskāra is done after the utterance of ''Omkar'' with the appropriate ''Bīja''

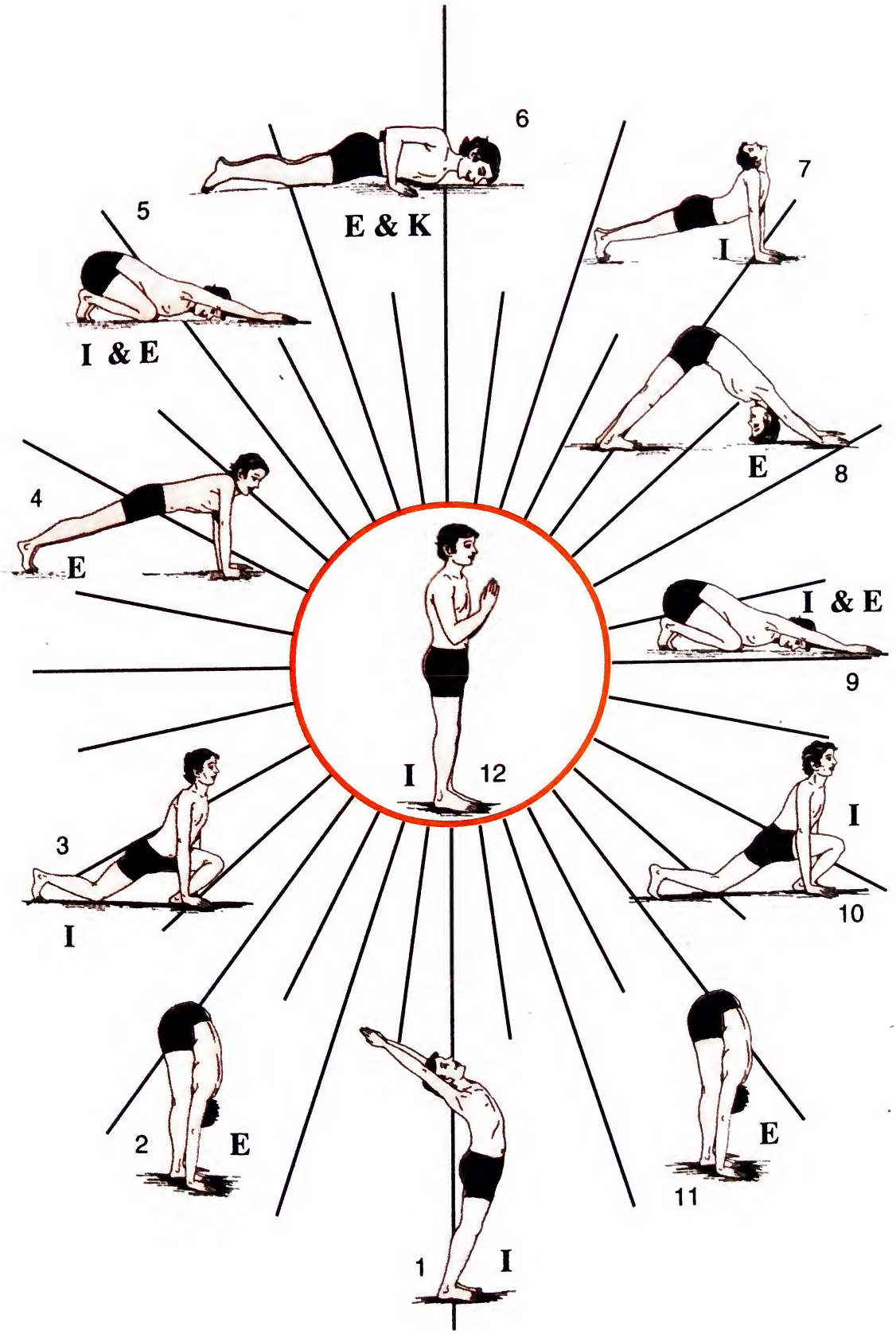
Mantra, along with the corresponding name of Sun God in the following sequence :

1. ॐ ह्रां मित्राय नमः — Aum Hrām Mitrāya Namaḥ
2. ॐ ह्रीं रवये नमः — Aum Hrīm Ravaye Namaḥ
3. ॐ ह्रूं सूर्याय नमः — Aum Hrūm Suryaya Namaḥ
4. ॐ ह्रैं भानवे नमः — Aum Hraīm Bhānave Namaḥ
5. ॐ ह्रौं खगाय नमः — Aum Hroum Khagāya Namaḥ
6. ॐ ह्रः पूष्णे नमः — Aum Hraḥ Pūṣṇe Namaḥ
7. ॐ ह्रां हिरण्यगर्भाय नमः — Aum Hrām Hiranyagarbhāya Namaḥ
8. ॐ ह्रीं मरीचये नमः — Aum Hrīm Marīcaye Namaḥ
9. ॐ ह्रूं आदित्याय नमः — Aum Hrúm Ādityāya Namaḥ
10. ॐ ह्रैं सवित्रे नमः — Aum Hraīm Savitre Namaḥ
11. ॐ ह्रौं अर्काय नमः — Aum Hroum Arkāya Namaḥ
12. ॐ ह्रः भास्कराय नमः — Aum Hraḥ Bhāskarāya Namaḥ

Each stage of Sūryanamaskāra is accompanied by regulation of breath. The 12 steps of the Sūryanamaskāra are as follows:

1. Stand erect with the legs together and palms together. Take the hands above the head and bend the trunk backwards. Here, inhale fully.
2. Bend the body to the front and touch the knees by the forehead. Keep the palms on the floor on either side of the legs. Exhale fully.
3. In this stage, kick the right leg back, take the left knee forward, look up and inhale. Press the buttock close to the heel.
4. In the next step, take the left leg also back, resting only on palms and toes; keep the body straight from head to toes inclined to the ground at about 30°. Here exhale completely.
5. Now, bend at the knee and rest the knees on the floor without altering the positions of the palms and toes. Rest the forehead on the ground. In this position inhale while moving backwards and then exhale completely. Do not stretch the ankles.

SŪRYANAMASKĀRA



I - Inhale E - Exale K- Hold the Breath

6. Without moving the hands and toes, come forward on the chest and rest the forehead. In this position साष्टाङ्ग नमस्कार Sāṣṭāṅga Namaskāra, forehead, chest, palms, knees and feet are the eight organs that will be touching the ground. The buttocks will be raised up. Stay in 'Breath-out' condition (Bāhyakumbhaka).

7. Inhale, raise the head and trunk making the spine concave upwards without changing the position of the hands and feet. Keep the knees off the ground.

8. Exhale. Raise the buttocks, push the head down and have a complete arch with the heels touching the ground and palms on the floor.

9. Same as 5th step. Inhale and exhale.

10. Inhale and bring the right leg in between the two hands and in line with them. Arch the back concave upwards as in step 3.

11. Exhale and bring the left foot forward next to the right foot and touch the knees with forehead as in 2.

12. Inhale. Come up, stand erect with hands in Namaskar mudra and relax.

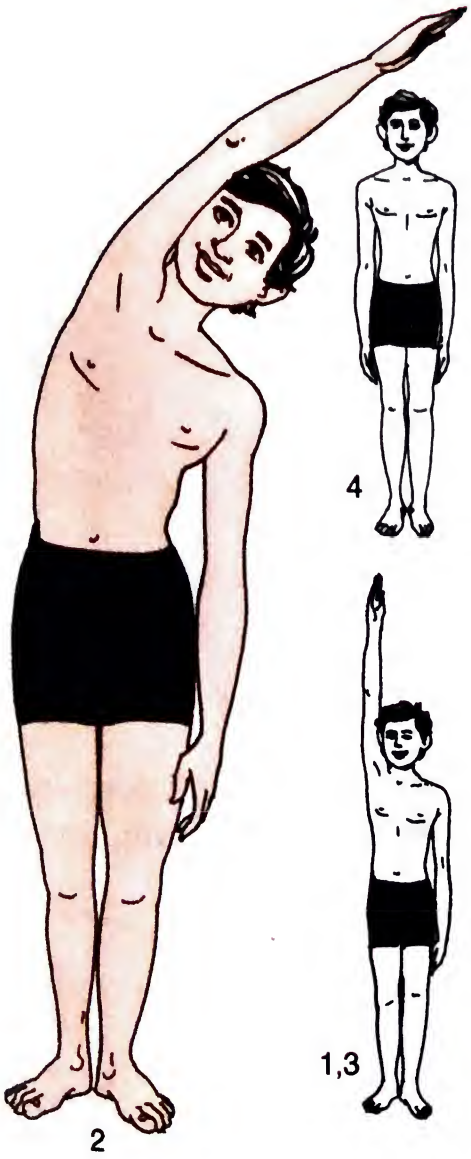
(In 10 stages - Sūryanamaskāra, the 5th and 9th stages are omitted.)

Meditation or contemplation with the prolonged pronunciation of "Omkar", the Bīja Akṣara 'Ha' and the letter or the sound 'Ṛ' which comes in every Mantra influences and stimulates the nerve centres in the brain corresponding to the respiratory, circulatory and digestive systems, make them more active, efficient and healthy.

The different names of the Sun according to their meanings, instil in the person those qualities like friendship, devotion, energy, health, strength, lustre and vigour as he identifies with the Supreme and meditates on those qualities during the practice

ARDHAKAṬICAKRĀSANA - *Lateral Arc Posture*

अर्धकटिचक्रासन



Ardha means half, Kaṭī means waist and Cakra means wheel. In the final position of the Āsana, the body looks laterally like a half wheel.

STHITI : Stand erect in straight line keeping the heels together and toes a little apart. Expand the chest and drop the shoulders to a relaxed position. Keep the neck straight. Fingers together, facing downward and palms stretched along the thighs by the sides. Relaxed face.

Ekam (1) Slowly rise the right arm sideways up above the head until the biceps touch the right ear, palm facing left with inhalation.

Dve (2) Bend slowly on the left side from the waist region, slide the left palm down as far as possible along the left leg. Exhale as you bend.

Trīṇi (3) Slowly come back to vertical position, keeping the hand up, with the biceps touching the ear with inhalation.

Catvāri (4) Bring the righthand sideways down to sthiti position with exhalation. (Note: - Repeat the same with left hand other side).

BENEFITS

Cultural: Elasticity of spine increases. Lateral thoracic muscles are stretched and blood supply increases. Hip joints become flexible, lung capacity increases and excess fat around the waist reduces.

Therapeutical: Relieves from backpain, constipation and good for flat foot.

Spiritual: Improves lateral awareness and a feeling of relaxation is built.

SUBTLE POINTS

Mode of bending:

a) Keep the raised arm straight.

b) Bend exactly laterally from the waist region.

c) Keep the legs straight.

d) Slide the other hand down along the leg.

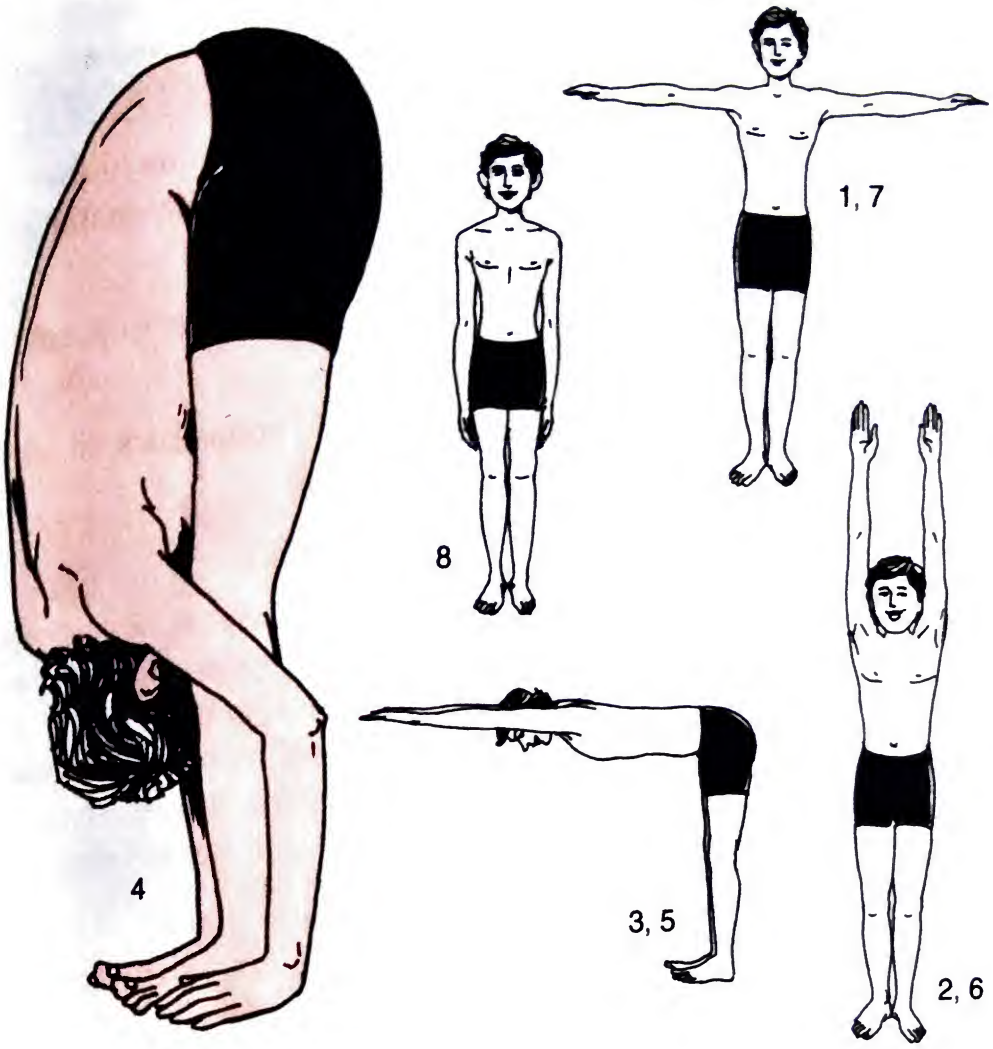
Mode of breathing : Breathe out whenever you bend downwards and inhale while coming up. Normal breathing in the final position.

PĀDA HASTĀSANA - *Forward-Bend Posture*

पादहस्तासन

Pāda means feet and Hasta means hands. In the final position hands will be kept by the side of the feet while bending the trunk forward.

STHITI : Stand erect in a straight line keeping the heels together and toes a little apart. Expand the chest and drop the shoulders to a relaxed position. Keep the neck straight. Fingers together, facing downwards and palms stretched along the thighs by the sides. Relaxed face.



Ekam (1) — With inhalation raise both the hands sideways up to shoulder level, palms facing down.

Dve (2) — Raise the hands up above the head with biceps touching the ears, palms facing forward. Continue the inhalation and stretch up the body from the coccyx.

Trīṇi (3) — With exhalation bend forward till the trunk comes to horizontal position, parallel to the ground.

Catvāri (4) — Bend further to touch the knees with the forehead and till the palms can rest on the ground, by the side of the feet, with exhalation. This is the final position of the asana. Breathe normally.

Panca (5)	Slowly raise the head along with the hands from the coccyx parallel to the ground with inhalation.
Ṣaṭa (6)	Raise the trunk along with the hands further up to vertical position of the body with continuous inhalation.
Sapta (7)	Bring the hands down sideways up to shoulder level with the exhalation.
Aṣṭa (8)	Bring the hands down i.e., come back to sthiti while exhaling.

BENEFITS

Cultural :-	The entire posterior muscles, sciatic nerve, tendons and ligaments of thighs and legs are stretched nicely. Spinal and pelvic nerves are toned up. Blood circulation to brain increases. Enhances secretion of gastric juices, reduces girth and slims down waist and hip muscles.
Therapeutical:	Good for digestive, gastric and intestinal problems. Useful in treating diabetes and improves function of the liver.
Spiritual:	Improves surface awareness, awareness of blood flow to the head region. Develops humility.
CAUTION:	Persons suffering from high blood pressure and heart diseases should do with care; spondilitis and lumbago patients should avoid.

SUBTLE POINTS

Mode of bending:

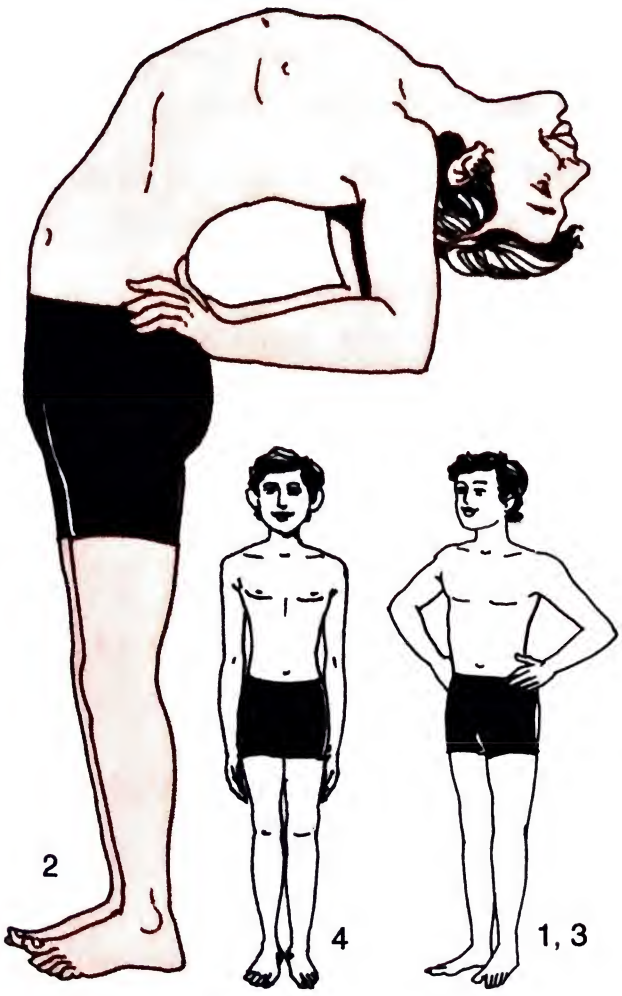
Legs should be straight and top of the head towards the floor in the final position of the Āsana.

Mode of breathing:

Breathe out whenever you bend downwards and inhale while coming up. Normal breathing in the final position.

ARDHACAKRĀSANA - *Half-Wheel Posture*

अर्धचक्रासन



Ardha means half and Cakra means wheel. In the final position body looks like a half wheel.

STHITI: Stand erect in a straight line keeping the heels together and toes a little apart. Expand the chest and drop the shoulders to a relaxed position. Keep the neck straight. Fingers together, facing downwards and palms stretched along the thighs by the sides. Relaxed face.

Ekam (1)

Support the back at the waist by the palms, while exhaling.

Dve (2) Bend backwards from the lumbar region. Neck bends backwards, stretching the muscles of the neck. Inhale while bending. This is the final position of the asana. Breathe normally.

Trīṇi (3) Come back to vertical position, keeping the support at the back at the waist by the palms. Inhale.

Catvāri (4) Release the hands from the support of the waist.

BENEFITS

Cultural: Tones up the dorsal muscles, calves and

lumbo sacral region. Improves blood flow to chest and neck regions. Flexibility of the spine is maintained. Being complementary to the Pādahastāsana, it enhances the benefits of it. Respiratory organs get toned.

Therapeutical: Good in treating Asthma and low back pain. Relaxes cramps in thighs and calves.

Spiritual: Builds up sense of balance and a feeling of confidence.

CAUTION: Hypertensives and heart patients should do slowly. Thin, tall and weak practitioners should avoid over-doing. They can spread their feet apart to stabilise.

SUBTLE POINTS

Mode of bending:

Keep the legs straight and fingers together facing forward.

Mode of breathing:

Breathe out whenever you bend downwards and inhale while coming up. Normal breathing in the final position.

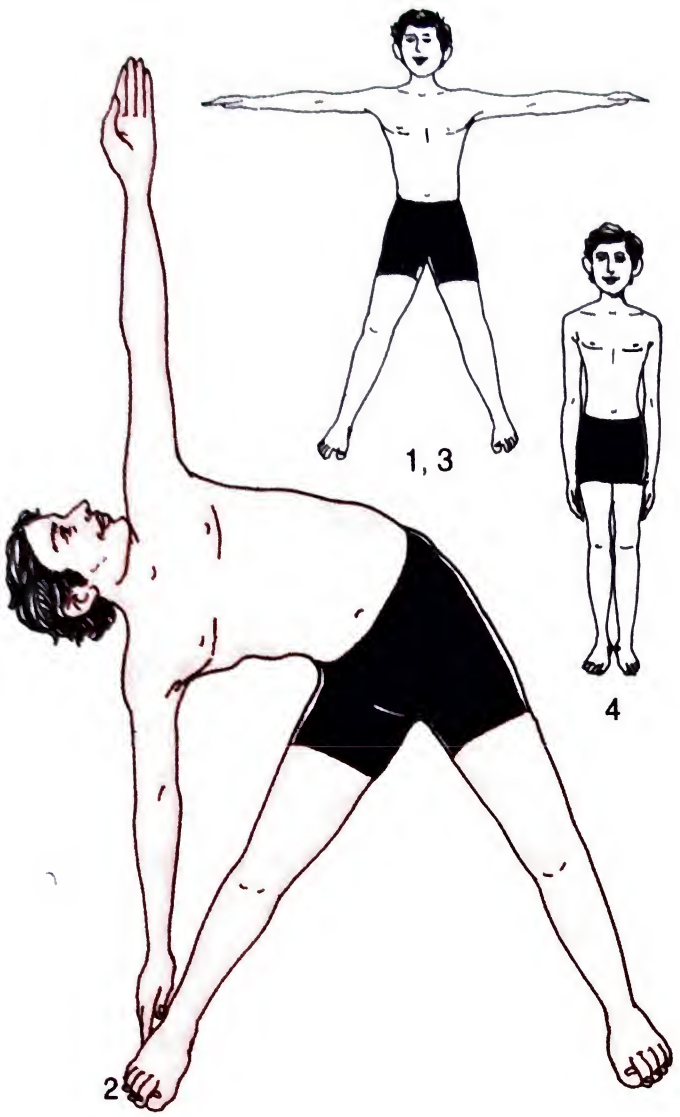
TRIKOṆĀSANA - *Triangle Posture*

त्रिकोणासन

Tri means three Koṇa means angle and Āsana means posture. In this final position the body resembles a triangle.

STHITI: Stand erect in a straight line keeping the heels together and toes a little apart. Expand the chest and drop the shoulders to a relaxed position. Keep the neck straight. Fingers together, facing downwards and palms stretched along the thighs by the sides. Relaxed face.

Ekam (1) Raise both the hands slowly by the sides till they reach the horizontal position as the right



foot is moved to about a metre away from the left foot. (Inhale)

Dve (2)
Slowly bend to the right side in the same plane. The fingers of the right hand touch the right foot. The left arm is straight up, in line with the right hand. Left palm faces forward. Stretch up the left arm and gaze along the fingers. (Exhale)

Trīṇi (3) Slowly come back to horizontal position without disturbing the legs. (Inhale)

Catvāri (4) Bring both the hands slowly down while keeping the right leg by the side of the other leg. (Exhale)

(Note:- Repeat the same with other side.)

BENEFITS

Cultural: Stretches the whole body especially the spine and back muscles. Stretch and relaxation of intercostal muscles, thighs, calves and hamstring muscles. Adrenal glands are stimulated. Massages Liver, Spleen, Pancreas and Kidneys. Slims down the hips and waistline, strengthens calves and thighs.

Therapeutical: Good for flat foot, Diabetes, Respiratory Ailments, Urinary disorders. Good in treating constipation and enhances appetite. Pain in back, neck, elbows, waist line and knees are relieved. Also effective for sciatica and hunchback.

CAUTION

Persons suffering from low back pain and arthritis should be careful.

SUBTLE POINTS

Mode of bending:

Bend from the right waist region and don't bend the knees and elbows. Avoid forward bending.

Mode of breathing:

Breathe out whenever you bend sidewards and inhale while coming up. Normal breathing in the final position.

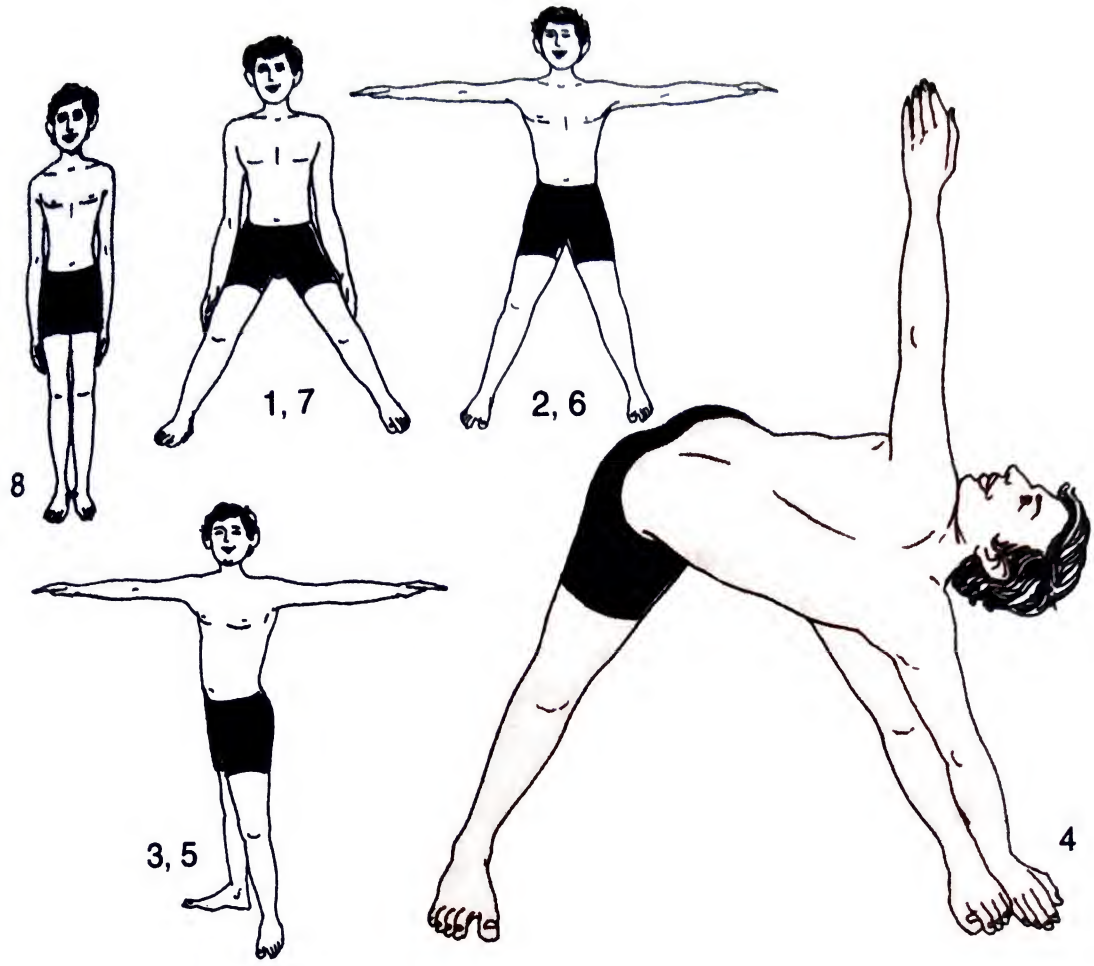
PARIVṚTTA TRIKOṆĀSANA - *Crossed Triangle Posture*

परिवृत्तत्रिकोणासन

Parivṛtta means crossed, Trikoṇa means triangle. In the final position of the posture, the body forms a Crossed Triangle Posture.

STHITI: Stand erect in a straight line keeping the heels together and toes a little apart. Expand the chest and drop the shoulders to a relaxed position. Keep the neck straight. Fingers together, facing downwards and palms stretched along the thighs by the sides. Relaxed face.

Ekam (1) Take the right foot apart from the other leg approximately one metre.



Dve (2)	Raise the hands sideways up to shoulder level palms facing downwards.
Trīṇi (3)	Turn from the waist towards the left side at 90 degrees, without disturbing the feet.
Catvāri (4)	Bend from the waist to place the right palm on the floor by the side of the left foot. Then look at the raised palm. (Exhale)
Pancha (5)	Slowly come up, facing the trunk towards right side and hands should be at shoulder level. (Inhale)
Ṣaṭa (6)	Turn from the waist towards the front.
Sapta (7)	Bring the hands down.
Aṣṭa (8)	Take the right foot back and keep it by the side of left foot. (Note:- Repeat the same with other side.)

BENEFITS

Cultural : Stretches all vertebrae and maintains health of the spinal column. Most of the intra abdominal organs are massaged and toned. Flexibility of the spine, waist and hip increases. Reduces abdominal fat and trims the waistline. Gives good rotational movement of the spine. Vitalises kidneys.

Therapeutical: Good for many digestive disorders. Loosens stiff joints of hips, shoulders, ankles, knees and relaxes stiffness in torso muscles.

Spiritual: A sense of lightness, freshness and relaxation is felt. Awareness of blood flow is developed.

CAUTION Those with severe cardiac problems, lumbago and heart ailments should avoid.

SUBTLE POINTS

Mode of bending:

Do not bend the knees. Keep the legs straight and don't bend the raised hand.

Mode of breathing:

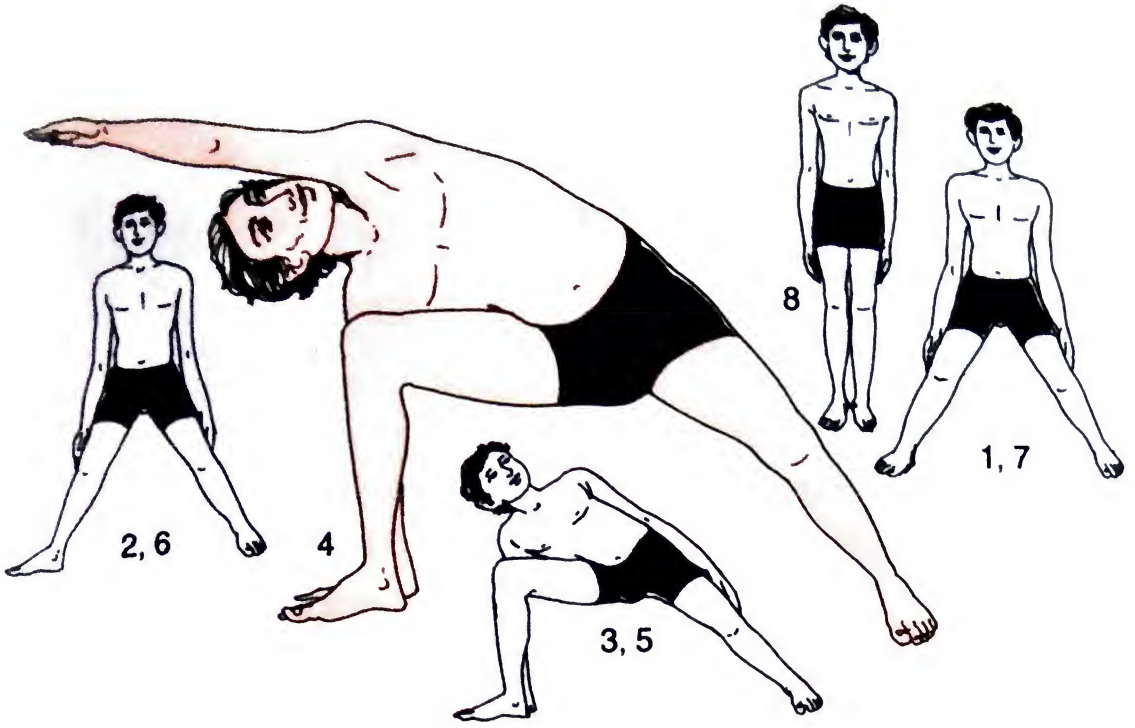
Breathe out whenever you bend downwards and twist and inhale while coming up. Normal breathing in the final position.

PĀRŚVAKOṆĀSANA - *Lateral Angle Posture*

पार्श्वकोणासन

Pārśva means lateral, Kōṇa means angle. In the final position of the posture, the body forms an angle by the sideways.

STHITI : Stand erect in straight line keeping the heels together and toes a little apart. Expand the chest and drop the shoulders to a relaxed position. Keep the neck straight. Fingers



together, facing downward and palms stretched along the thighs by the sides. Relaxed face.

Ekam (1) — Take the right leg apart from the left approximately 1 to 1.5 metres.

Dve (2) — Turn the right foot towards the right side at 90 degrees, without turning the body.

Trīṇi (3) — Bend towards right side, keeping the right thigh parallel to the ground. Place the right palm on the right side of right feet, with fingers together and facing outside. Right side of the body should touch the right thigh (while exhaling).

Catvāri (4) — Raise the left arm up biceps touching the left ear, keeping the arm straight and gaze at the finger tips (normal breathing). This is the final posture.

Panca (5) — Bring the left hand back and place it on the left thigh (while inhaling).

Sata (6)	Slowly come up, keeping the right feet as it is (while inhaling).
Sapta (7)	Turn the right feet 90 degrees to left .
Asta (8)	Bring the right leg closer to the left leg (while exhaling).
	(Note: - Repeat the same with other side.)

BENEFITS

Cultural:	Expands thoracic muscles. Strengthens calves forehands, biceps, ankle, knee, wrist and shoulder joints. Stretches and relaxes thighs.
Therapeutical	: Useful in treating Diabetes, Constipation and pain in foreleg and ankle joints.
Spiritual:	Builds feeling of expansiveness and relaxation.

SUBTLE POINTS

Mode of bending:-

a) While bending down bend down sidewards avoiding forward bending.

b) The weight of the body should fall on the front leg and not on the hand.

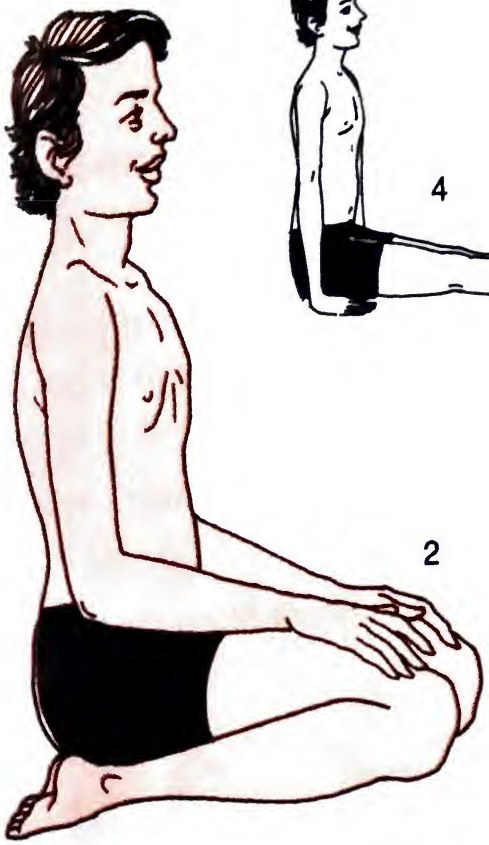
c) Gaze along the left palm.

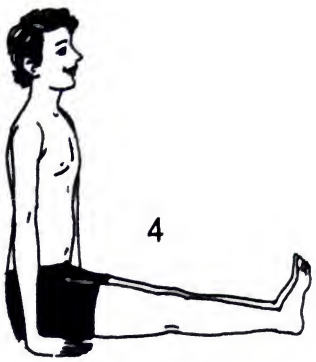
Mode of breathing : Breathe out whenever you bend downwards and inhale while coming up. Normal breathing in the final position.

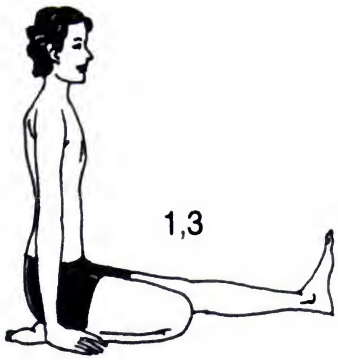
VAJRĀSANA - *The Ankle Pose*

वज्रासन

Vajra means diamond. Figuratively Vajra signifies strength and vigour. By the practice of this Āsana the Vajra Nāḍi which







runs through the ankle is toned and strengthened. In a more comprehensive way Vajrāsana practice strengthens the entire psycho-physiological system.

STHITI: Sit erect with legs stretched heels together, palms pressing on the floor by the side of the buttocks.

Ekam (1) Fold the right leg at the knee and place the heel under the right buttock.

Dve (2) Fold the left leg at the knee and place the heel under the left buttock. Knees must be together and rest the palms on the upper thighs. Sit erect in a relaxed state.

Trini (3) Gently unfold the left leg and keep it straight as in Ekam position.

Catvari (4) Gently unfold the right leg and return to Sthiti.

BENEFITS

Cultural Loosens the joints and muscles of the legs. Increases blood circulation to the lower abdominal region.

Therapeutical Extremely good for the hypertension, sciatica and gastro-intestinal disorders.

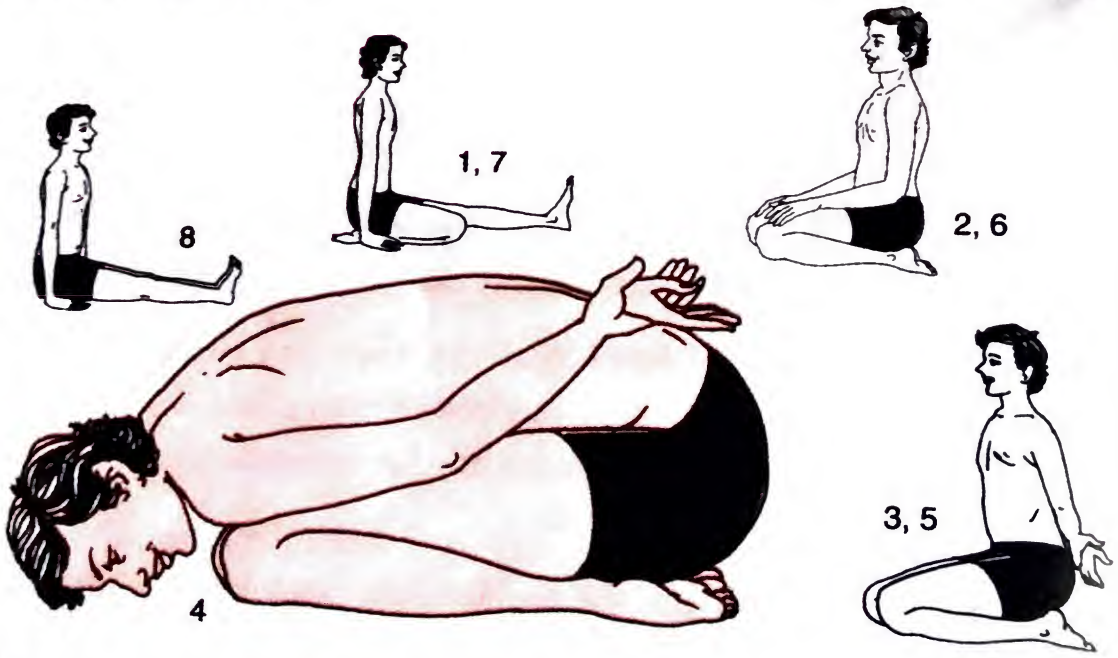
Spiritual	Very much useful in meditation and pranayama practices.
CAUTION	Severe arthritis patients should do carefully.

SUBTLE POINTS

Mode of Bending	Try to keep the heels together, if possible. Maintain erect spine with relaxed shoulder and neck joints.
Mode of breathing	Maintain slow, deep, rhythmic, relaxed abdominal breathing

ŚAŚĀṆKĀSANA - *The Rabbit or The Crescent Moon Posture*

शशांकासन



Śaśāṇka means Crescent Moon. It is also believed that originally the name was Śaśaka (Rabbit) Āsana (Posture). In the final position of the asana the body resembles a Crescent Moon or Rabbit.

STHITI:	Sit erect with legs stretched, heels together, palms pressing on the floor by the side of the buttocks.
Ekam (1)	Slowly bend the right leg, and keep the heel tight under the buttocks.

Dve (2)	Bring the left leg under the left buttock. Keep the knees close to each other, spine erect, the head, shoulders and buttocks in a vertical line. Rest the palms on the upper part of the thighs or covering the knees.
Trīṇi (3)	Catch the right hand with the left palm behind the back.
Catvāri (4)	Bend forward from the waist; rest the forehead on the floor in front of the knees. (Exhale)
Panca (5)	Slowly raise the head and chest up. (Inhale)
Ṣaṭa (6)	Release the hands and keep the palms on the thighs.
Sapta (7)	Unfold the left leg and keep it straight.
Aṣṭa (8)	Unfold the right leg and keep it straight..

BENEFITS

Cultural:	Improves blood circulation to all abdominal organs. Vitalises pelvis and nerves of the lower back. Helps in seminal weaknesses.
Therapeutical:	Whole body gets relaxed and the sensitivity can be felt throughout.
Spiritual:	The system becomes cool and mind relaxed.

CAUTION

Lumbago and spondilitis patients should avoid.

SUBTLE POINTS

Mode of bending:

Don't raise the buttocks above the heels. Keep both the knees and thighs joined

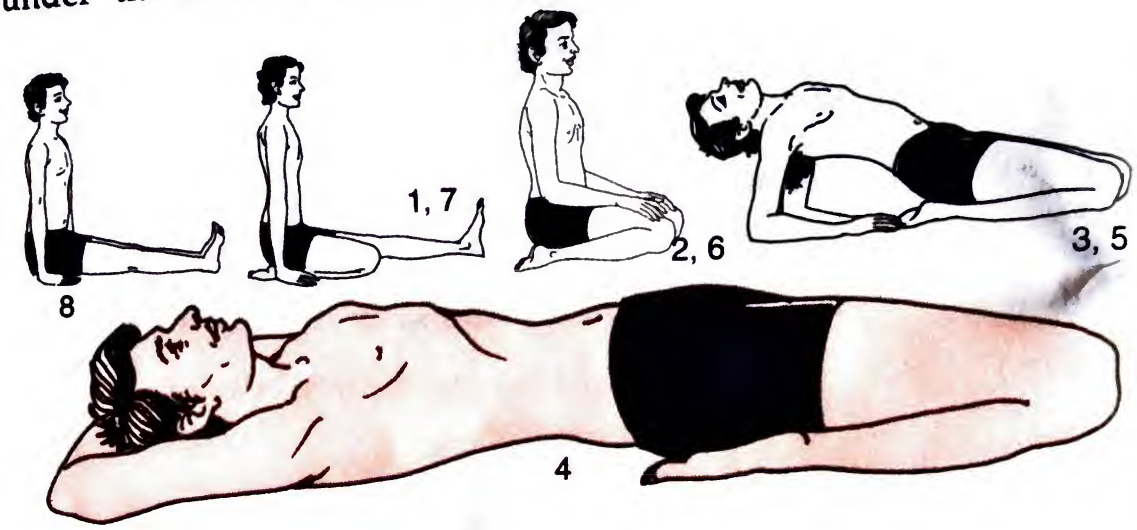
Mode of breathing:

Breathe out whenever you bend downwards and inhale while coming up. Normal breathing in the final position

SUPTAVAJRĀSANA - *Supine Ankle Posture*

सुप्तवज्रासन

Supta means reclined/dormant. In the final position of the posture, the back rests on the floor, while keeping the feet under the buttocks as in Vajrāsana.



STHITI: Sit erect with legs stretched, heels together, palms pressing on the floor by the side of the buttocks.

Ekam (1) Fold the right leg at the knee and place the heel under the right buttock.

Dve (2) Fold the left leg at the knee and place the heel under the left buttock. Knees must be together and rest the palms on the upper thighs.

Trīṇi (3) Slowly recline backwards keeping the entire body weight on the right elbow and then on the left elbow.

Catvāri (4) Lie on the back by crossing the hands over the head.

Panca (5) Release the hands and keep them along the side of the body. Return to position No.3

Ṣaṭa (6) With the support of the elbows slowly come

back to Vajrasana position. (Return to position No.2).

Sapta (7) Unfold the left leg and keep it straight.

Aṣṭa (8) Unfold the right leg and keep it straight i.e., return to sthiti.

BENEFITS

Cultural : Stretches and tones up spine, abdominal organs and pelvic region. Increases blood flow to thighs and buttocks. Reduces stiffness and rigidity in thighs and legs. Mobilising hips, ankles and lower back.

Therapeutical: Very useful for persons who do long standing jobs and useful against constipation.

Spiritual: The dormant forces at the base of the spine become active and by regular practice relaxation deepens.

CAUTION Those who have cervical spondilitis and heart problems should avoid.

SUBTLE POINTS

Mode of bending:

Keep the knees close together touching the ground.

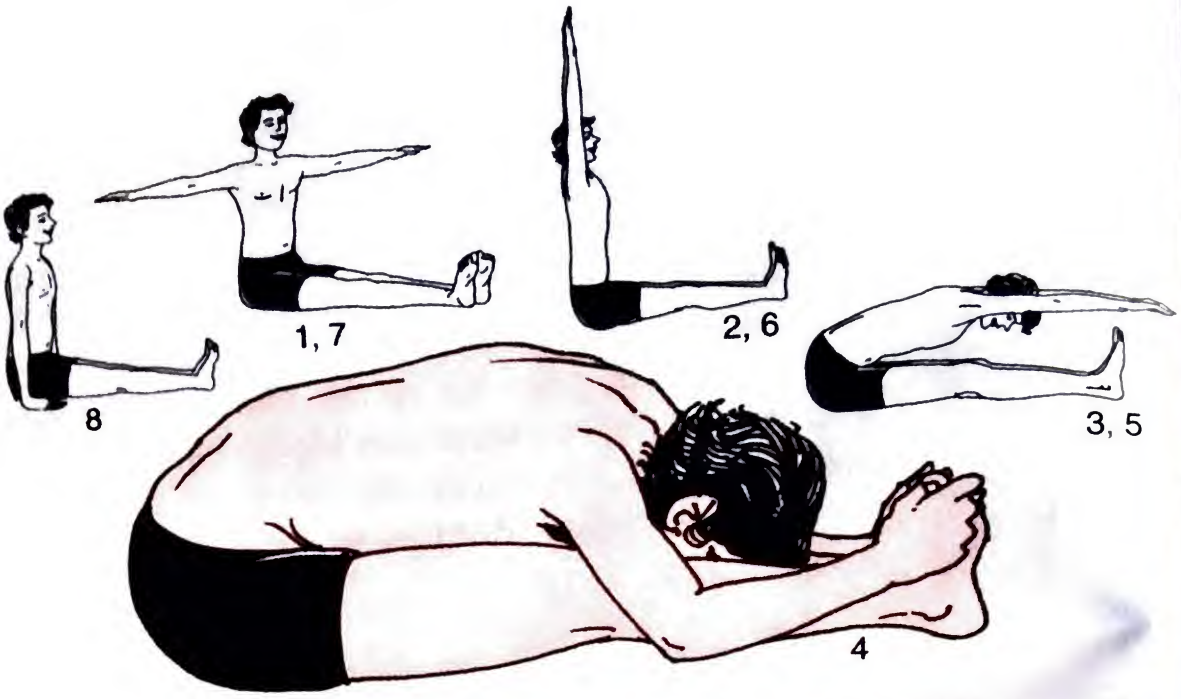
Mode of breathing :

Breathe out whenever you bend downwards and inhale while coming up. Normal breathing in the final position.

PASCIMATĀNĀSANA - *Posterior Stretching Posture*

पश्चिमतानासन

Paścima means posterior and Tāna means stretch. In the final position the entire posterior parts from the toes to the neck are stretched.



STHITI: Sit erect with legs stretched, heels together, palms pressing on the floor by the side of the buttocks.

Ekam (1) Raise the hands sideways up to the shoulder level without bending the elbows; and palms facing downwards.

Dve (2) Raise the arms up so that the biceps touch the ears respectively; palms facing forward.

Trīṇi (3) Bend forward from the lumbar region along with the hands and keep them parallel to the ground. Let the wrists come above the toes.

Catvāri (4) With the index fingers form the hooks and catch the big toes respectively. And bend further forward, then rest the face on the knees.

Panca (5) Release the fingers, then come back parallel to the ground.

Ṣaṭa (6) Come to vertical, like 2nd position.

Sapta (7) Bring the hands down to sideways i.e., come back to 1st position.

Aṣṭa (8) Rest the palms on the floor, then bring the hands back to sthiti.

BENEFITS

Cultural:	Stretches and tones up the entire posterior and frontal abdominal muscles. Tones up lumbo sacral nerves. Slims and trims the body in general. Liver, Pancreas and intestines and gastric fire are activated. Helps to increase height in adolescents.
Therapeutical:	Useful in dyspepsia, constipation, sciatica, seminal weaknesses, piles, diabetes and digestive disorders. Reduces fat in abdomen.
Spiritual:	Anahata dhvani can be heard. Rouses dormant spiritual forces.
CAUTION	B.P., spondilitis and chronic constipation patients should avoid. Maintaining for long time without the practice of Uḍḍīyāna will lead to digestive disorders.

SUBTLE POINTS

Mode of bending:

Do not allow the knees to bend. Rest your elbows on the floor.

Mode of breathing:

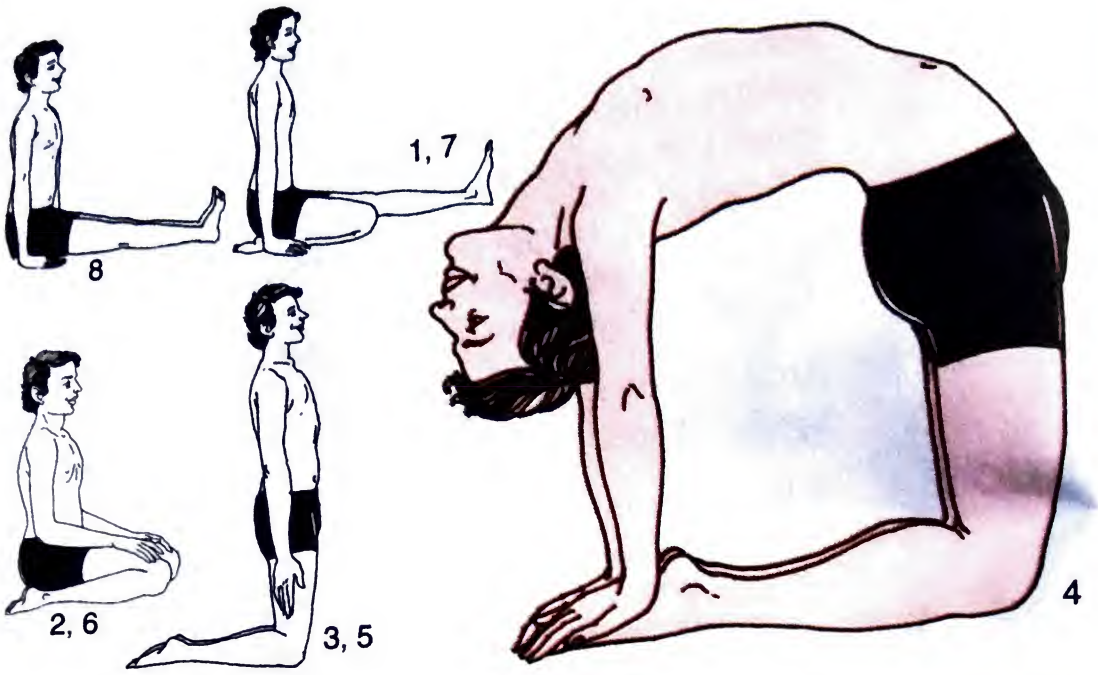
Breathe out whenever you bend downwards and inhale while coming up. Normal breathing in the final position.

UṢṬRĀSANA - *Camel Posture*

उष्ट्रासना

Uṣṭrā means camel. Final position of the posture looks like a camel.

STHITI:	Sit erect with legs stretched, heels together, palms pressing on the floor by the side of the buttocks.
Ekam (1)	Fold the right leg at the knee and place the heel under the right buttock.
Dve (2)	Fold the left leg at the knee and place the heel under the left buttock.(Vajrāsana)



Trīṇi (3)	Stand on the knees making the trunk vertical.
Catvāri (4)	Recline the body backwards and keep the palms on the soles.
Panca (5)	Slowly release the palms and return to 3rd position.
Ṣaṭa (6)	Slowly sit on the heels.
Sapta (7)	Unfold the left leg and keep it straight.
Aṣṭa (8)	Unfold the right leg and keep it to the side of left leg.

BENEFITS

Cultural:	Flexibility of spine and blood flow to brain increases and tones up abdominal viscera and stretches thoracic Region.
Therapeutical:	Good for back aches, breathing problems, Arthritis, Lumbago, Sciatica, Flatulence and Gastric Troubles.
Spiritual:	Develops confidence, shatters *tamas* and activates the practitioner.

CAUTION Heart patients should do carefully and Hernia patients should avoid.

SUBTLE POINTS

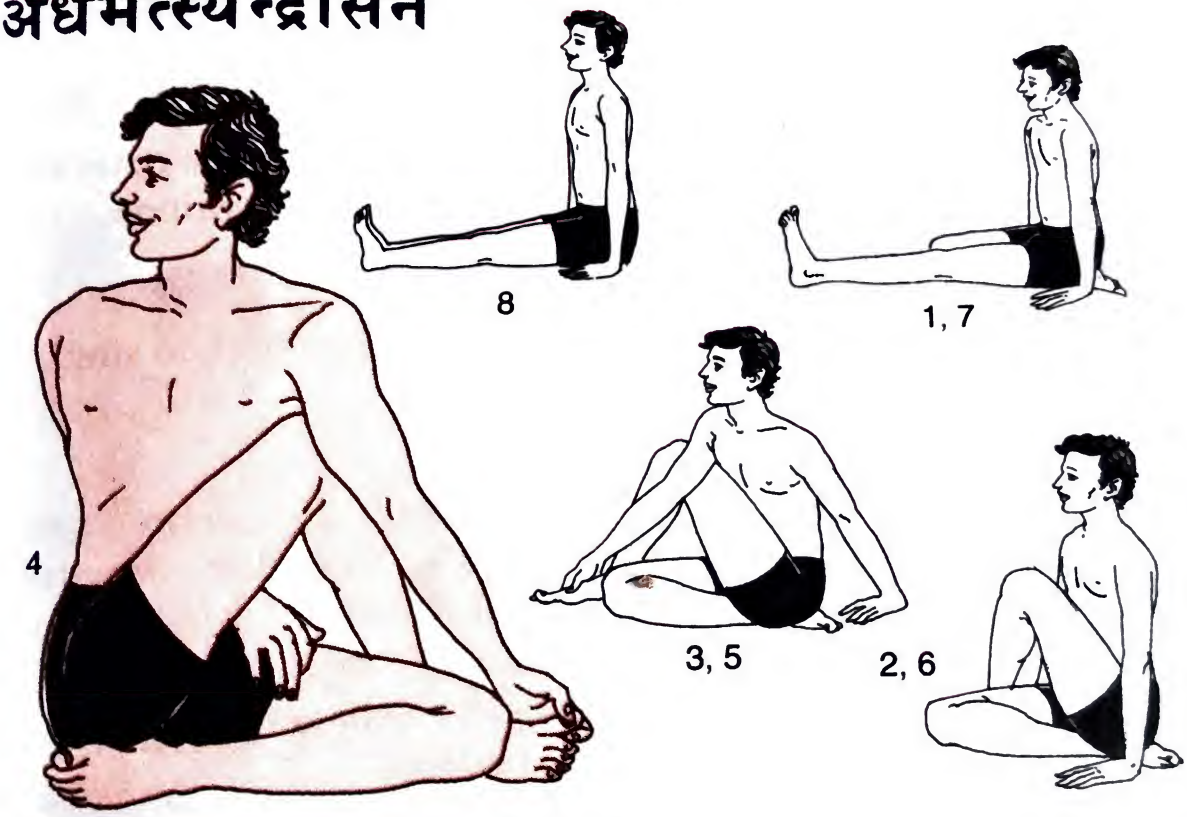
Mode of bending : Keep the knees together.

Mode of breathing :

Breathe out whenever you bend downwards and inhale while coming up. Normal breathing in the final position.

ARDHAMATSYENḌRĀSANA - *The Half-Twist Posture*

अर्धमत्स्येन्द्रासन



Ardha means half, Matsyeṇdra is a Yogi. Yogi Matsyendranāth attained the highest state of Yoga in this posture. The body takes the position of half-of Yogi Matsyeṇdranāth's description of the Asana.

STHITI: Sit erect with legs stretched, heels together, palms pressing on the floor by the side of the buttocks.

Ekam (1) Fold the right knee and place the heel tight against the perineum.

Dve (2) Place the left foot by the side of the right thigh near the knee.

Trīṇi (3) Bring the right hand round the outer side of the left knee passing between the chest and the knee and catch hold of the left big toe. The right shoulder blade rests on the outer side of the left knee.

Catvāri (4) Now take the left hand round the back and try to catch the right thigh. Look back over the left shoulder, (the erect knee acts as a fulcrum for getting maximum twist of the spine). Keep the trunk vertical.

Panca (5) Release the left hand; come back to 3rd position.

Ṣaṭa (6) Slowly release the right hand over the outer side of the left knee; come back to 2nd position.

Sapta (7) Unfold the left leg; come back to sthiti.

Aṣṭa (8) Unfold the right leg, then come back to sthiti.

BENEFITS

Cultural: Twists, tones, stretches, the entire spine. Enhances lower back's flexibility. Maintains health of the spinal nerves. Massages the spleen, liver, pancreas, intestines and bladder. Activates the gonads. Enhances secretion of pancreatic juice and adrenalin.

Therapeutical: Good for constipation, dyspepsia, diabetes, Kidney problems, enlarged and congested liver and spleen, rheumatism of back muscles. pain in hip joints, obesity and gastritis. Reduces girth in the abdomen.

Spiritual: Removes laziness and helps to attain the state of Yogi Matsyendra.

CAUTION Hernia patients should avoid.

SUBTLE POINTS

Mode of bending: Do not sit on the heels.

Mode of breathing :

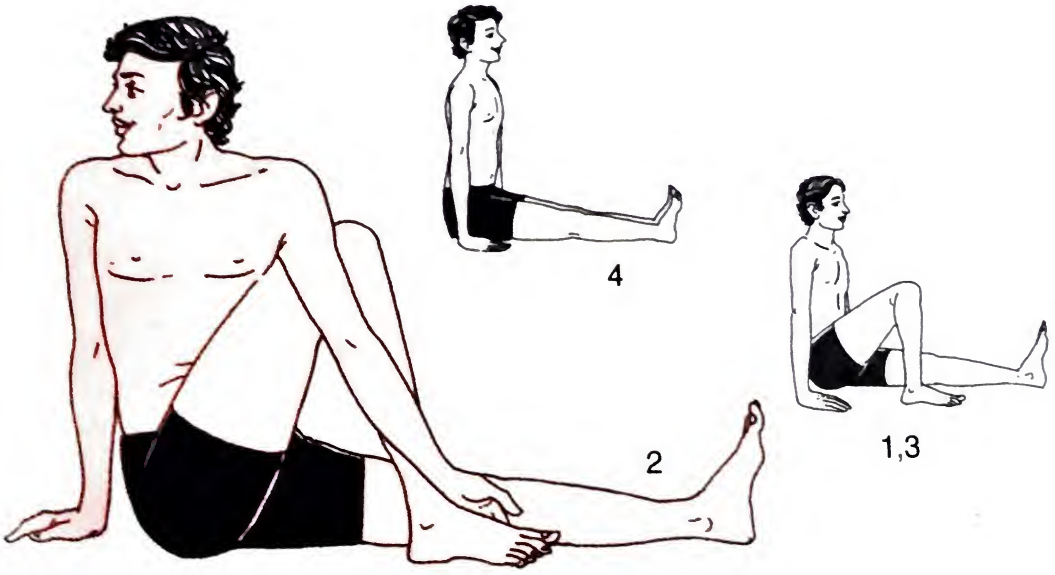
Breathe out whenever you bend downwards and inhale while coming up. Normal breathing in the final position.

VAKRĀSANA - *Twist Posture*

वक्रासन

Vakrā means twist. In the final position of the posture, the body will be in a twisted position.

STHITI: Sit with legs stretched, heels together, palms pressing on the floor by the side of the buttocks.



Ekam (1) Bend the right leg at the knee and place the right foot by the side of the left knee.

Dve (2) Twist the body towards the right side and take the left hand over the right knee and catch the right big toe. Place the right hand behind the trunk and keep the right palm on the floor and look towards the right side.

Trīṇi (3) Release the left hand (unfold the left hand) and keep it by the left side on the floor.

Catvāri (4) Unfold the right leg and keep it by the side of the left leg, i.e., the Sthiti.

BENEFITS

Cultural: Lateral twist obtained, tones, stretches, the entire spine. Enhances lower back's flexibility. Maintains health of the spinal nerves. Massages spleen, liver, pancreas, intestines and bladder. Activates the gonads. Enhances secretion of pancreatic juice and adrenalin.

Therapeutical: Good for Constipation, Dyspepsia, Diabetes, Kidney problems, enlarged and congested liver and spleen, rheumatism of back muscles. Pain in hipjoints, obesity and gastritis, reduces girth in the abdomen.

Spiritual: Removes laziness and helps to attain the state of Yogi Matsyendra.

CAUTION Hernia patients should avoid.

SUBTLE POINTS

Mode of bending :

In the final position the trunk should be straight.

Mode of breathing :

Breathe out whenever you bend downwards and inhale while coming up. Normal breathing in the final position.

PADMĀSANA - *The Lotus Pose*

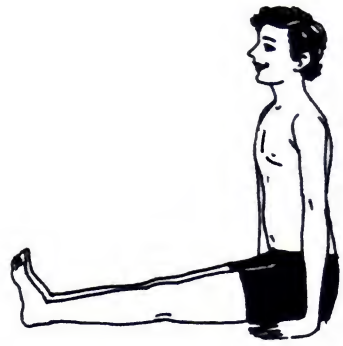
पद्मासन

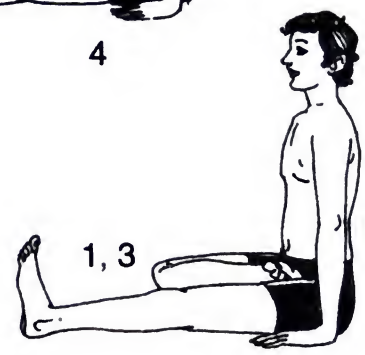
Padma is the lotus. Lotus flower is the symbol of purity, symmetry and balance. Practice of Padmāsana instills these qualities in the practitionerâs body-mind system.

STHITI:

Sit erect with legs stretched heels together, palms pressing on the floor by the side of the buttocks.

Ekam (1) Fold the right leg at the knee and place the right heel at the root of the left thigh.





Dve (2) Fold the left leg at the knee and palce the left heel at the root of the right thigh. Place your palms on the knees, facing upwards. Join the tips of the thumb and the fore finger, keeping the other fingers straight Sit erect in a relaxed mood.

Trini (3) Unfold the left leg and return to Ekam (1).

Catvari (4) Unfold the right leg and return to Sthiti position.

BENEFITS Maintains balanced flow of energy throughout the body. Very useful in the practice of Antaraṇga yoga as one can sit comfortably for a long stretch of time maintaining the awareness.

CAUTION Severe arthritis patients should do carefully.

MAKARĀSANA - *Crocodile Posture*

मकरासन

Makara means Crocodile. In the final position of the posture, it looks like a crocodile.

STHITI: Lie down on the prone with the hands above the head keeping straight alongside the head resting the palms on the ground, touching the

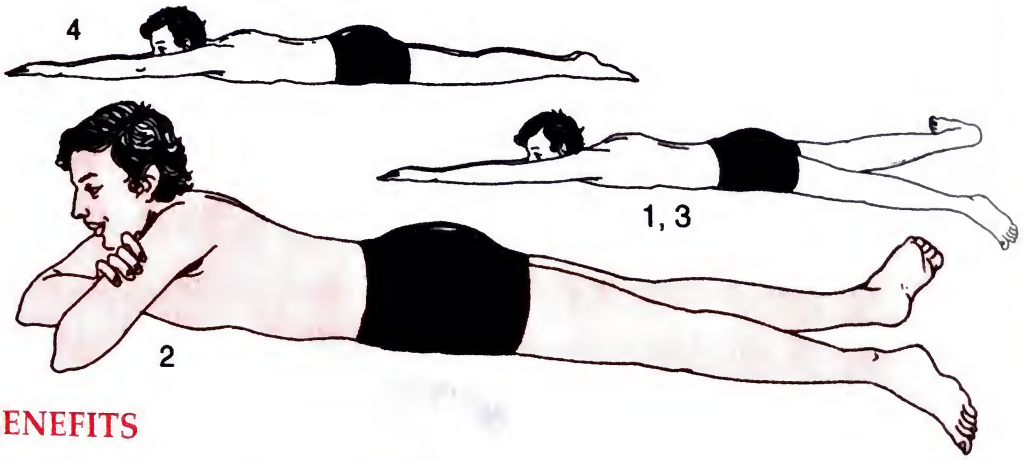
chin on the floor, and legs together soles facing up. Keep the body from toes to head in a straight line.

Ekam (1) — Keep the legs apart; heels facing each other, toes facing outwards.

Dve (2) — Fold the right hand and place the right palm on the left shoulder. Then similarly keep the left palm on the right shoulder. Keep the chin on the point where the two arms cross. (Rest and relax in this posture).

Trīṇi (3) — Remove the left palm and unfold the left hand, similarly the right palm and hand and come back to position No.1.

Catvāri (4) — Bring the legs together i.e., come back to the sthiti.



BENEFITS

Cultural : It gives relaxation to the entire body.

Therapeutical: This posture is useful for many ailments caused by tensions like Hypertension, Insomnia etc.,

SUBTLE POINTS

Mode of bending:

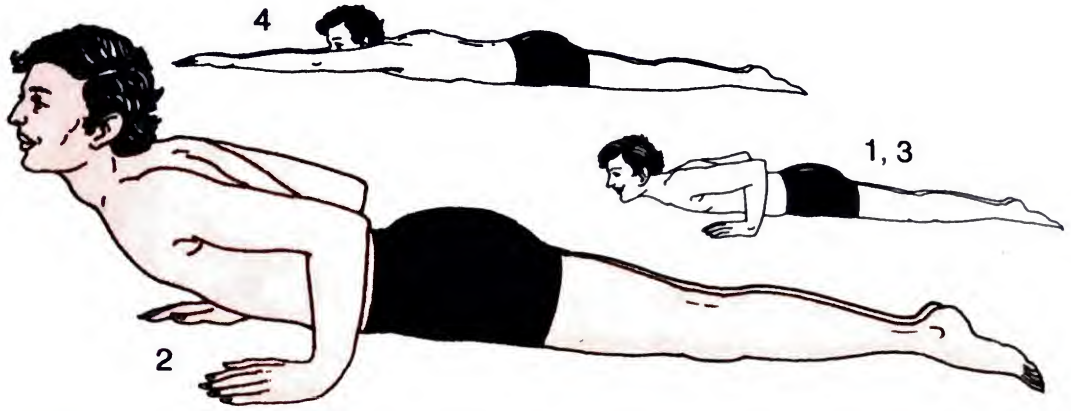
In final position keep the elbows on the floor instead of keeping the biceps. And touch the heels on the ground

Mode of breathing : Normal breathing in the final position..

BHUJAṆGĀSANA - *Serpent Posture*

भुजङ्गासन

Bhujanga means Serpent. In the final position of the posture, the body looks like a serpent when it raises its hood.



STHITI: Lie down on the prone with the hands above the head keeping straight alongside the head resting the palms on the ground, touching the chin on the floor, and legs together soles facing up. Keep the body from toes to head in a straight line.

Ekam (1) Bend both the elbows and place the palms on the floor by the side of the last rib bone.

Dve (2) Slowly lift the head and then raise the chest. Feel the weight of the body at the lumbar region.

Trīṇi (3) Bring the chest and head down, touching the floor with the chin.

Catvāri (4) Release the hands and place them above the head region on the floor i.e. come back to the sthiti.

BENEFITS

Cultural : Keeps dorsal spine elastic and strong. Thoracic muscles expand and tone up all the 31 pairs of spinal nerves.

Therapeutical: Good for back aches due to over strain work, neck pain, cervical spondilitis, hunch back, bronchitis, asthma, digestive disorders, reduction of the abdominal fat. Improves digestion and bowel action.

Spiritual: Rise of Kuṇḍalini is noticed at the body level in the form of heat and energy outbursts.

CAUTION Hernia patients and hypertensives should avoid.

SUBTLE POINTS

Mode of bending :

a) In the first step, elbows facing towards the roof / sky. And keep the fingers together.

b) In final posture try to lift the trunk till the navel portion is about to leave the ground.

c) Arch the dorsal spine well.

d) Keep the body below navel straight in touch with the floor.

Mode of breathing :-

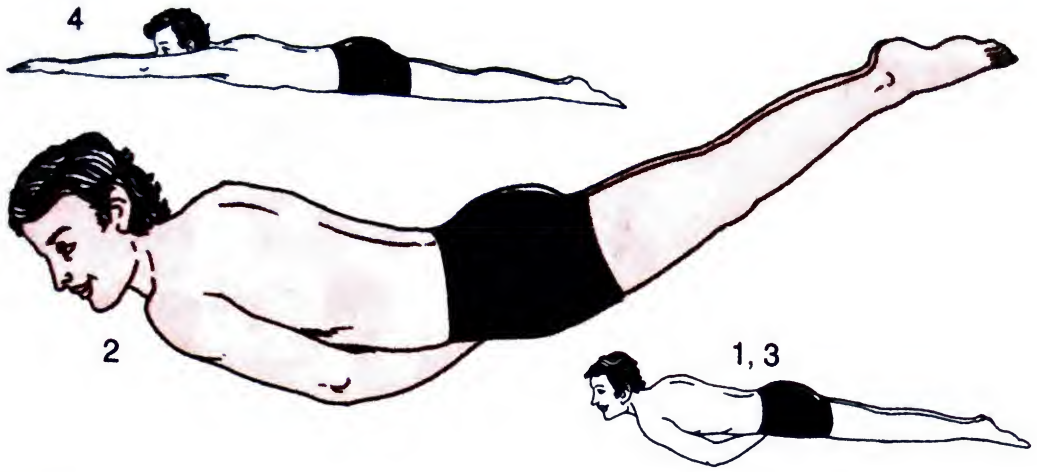
Breathe out whenever you bend downwards and inhale while coming up. Normal breathing in the final position.

ŚALABHĀSANA - *Locust Posture*

शलभासन

Śalabha is a name of the insect called Locust. In the final position it looks like a locust.

STHITI: Lie down on the prone with the hands above the head keeping straight alongside the head resting the palms on the ground, touching the chin on the floor, and legs together, soles facing up. Keep the body from toes to head in a straight line.



Ekam (1)	Make the fists and place it under the root of the thigh.
Dve (2)	Raise both the legs together up from the waist.
Trīṇi (3)	Return to position No.1.
Catvāri (4)	Return to sthiti.

BENEFITS

Cultural:	Complements the results of Bhujaṇgāsana. Hips, lumbar region, pelvic, abdominal, Thighs, kidneys and legs are toned up. Activates pancreas.
Therapeutical:	Useful in combating constipation, gastritis, diabetes and lumbago.
Spiritual:	Body becomes light, agile and active and helps in sense control.
CAUTION	Persons suffering from urinary track disorders, hernia and hypertension should avoid.

SUBTLE POINTS

Mode of bending:

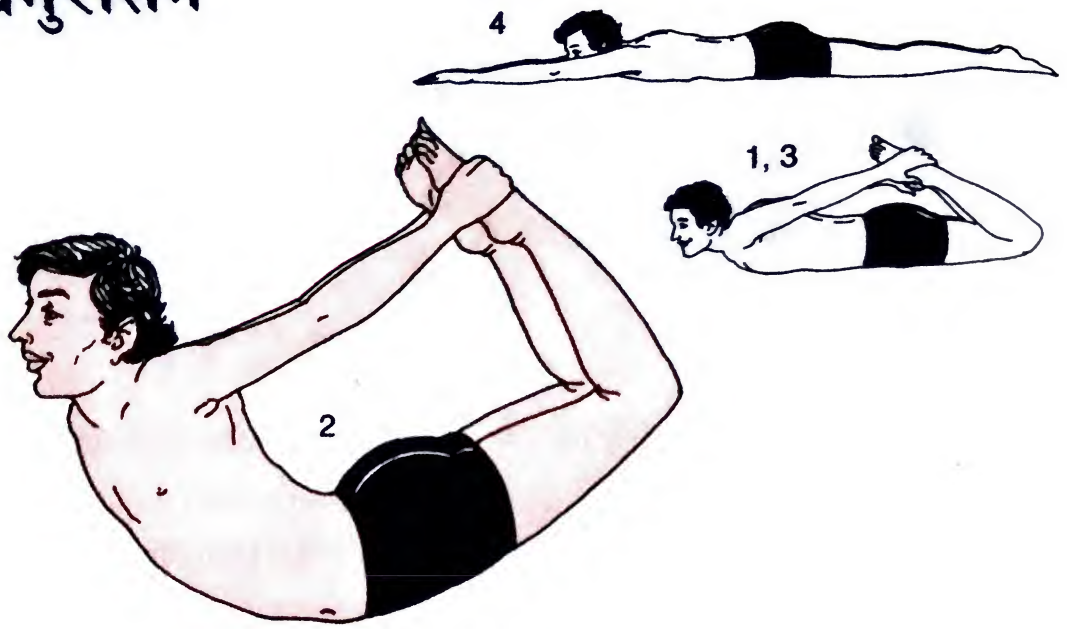
In the final position the knees should be straight.

Mode of breathing :

Breathe out whenever you bend downwards and inhale while coming up. Normal breathing in the final position.

DHANURĀSANA - *Bow Posture*

धनुरासन



Dhanuḥ means bow, in the final position of the posture, the body looks like a bow.

STHITI: Lie down on the prone with the hands above the head keeping straight alongside the head resting the palms on the ground, touching the chin on the floor, and legs together soles facing up. Keep the body from toes to head in a straight line.

Ekam (1) Fold the knees and hold the respective feet.

Dve (2) Raise the head, chest and also thighs by tugging the hands and legs, so that the spine is arched backwards like a bow. Look up.

Trīṇi (3) Return to position No.1.

Catvāri (4) Return to sthiti.

BENEFITS

Cultural: Slims and activates body. Recti muscles that flex the hip joints are toned up to be healthy. Abdominal fat is reduced.

Therapeutical: Good for breathing problems, back ache, diabetes, gastro-intestinal problems and improves digestion.

Spiritual: Shatters tamas and stimulates the system.

CAUTION: Hernia patients and hypertensives should avoid.

SUBTLE POINTS

Mode of bending:

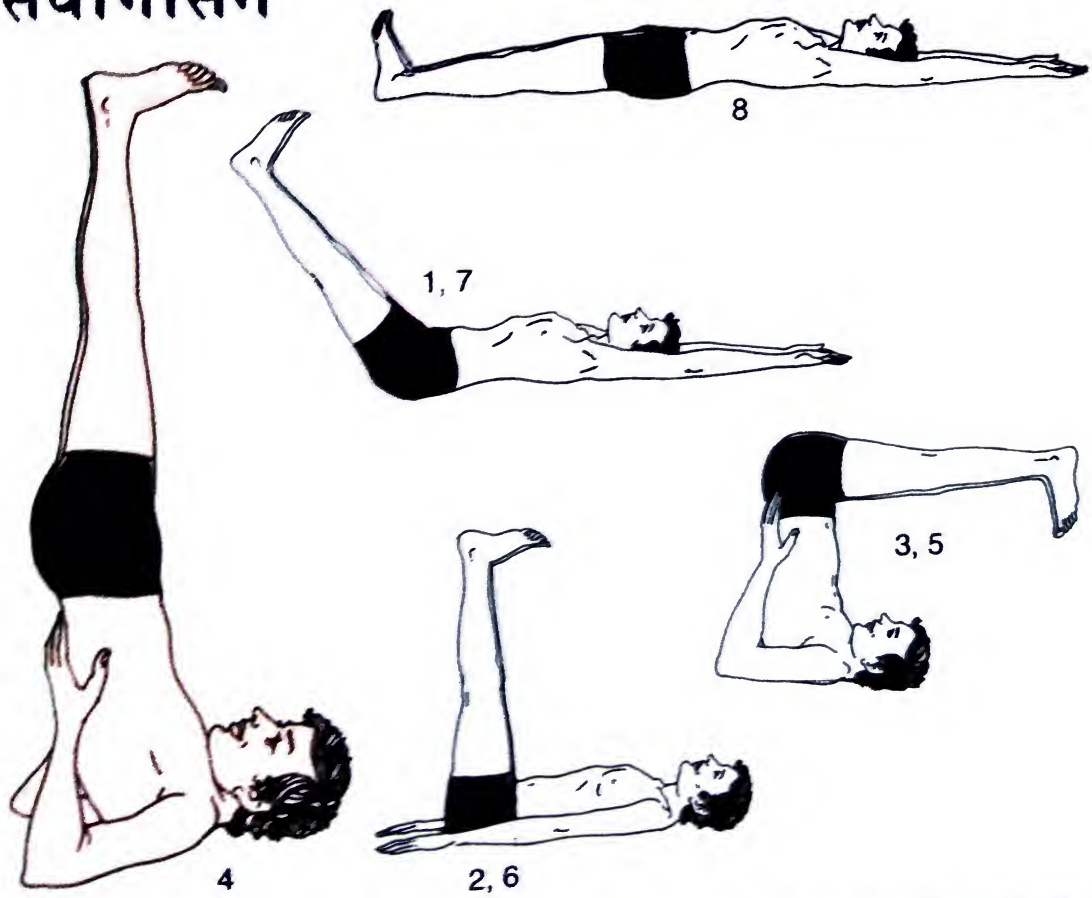
Elbows should be kept unbent and knees should be together.

Mode of breathing :

Breathe out whenever you bend downwards and inhale while coming up. Normal breathing in the final position.

SARVĀṆGĀSANA - *Standing-On-Shoulders*

सर्वांगासन



By the practice of this asana, the health of all parts of the body

(Sarvāṇgā) is maintained. This is achieved by toning and balancing the functioning of the Thyroid.

STHITI: Lie down on the supine keeping the legs together and stretch the hands straight above the head region i.e., from toes to head, the entire body in a straight line.

Ekam (1) Raise both the legs together up to 45 degrees from the ground.

Dve (2) Further raise the legs up to 90 degrees and place the hands by the side of the body.

Trīṇi (3) Raise further, the buttocks and the trunk taking the support of the arms and the elbows by firmly placing the elbows on the ground and support the back with both the palms. Keep the legs parallel to the ground.

Catvāri (4) Keep the trunk and legs in a straight line by supporting the trunk on the shoulders. Keep the head on the floor.

Panca (5) Return to position No. 3.

Ṣaṭa (6) Return to position No. 2.

Sapta (7) Return to position No. 1.

Aṣṭa (8) Return to sthiti.

BENEFITS

Cultural: Maintains healthy thyroid and thereby general health. Beneficially influences and tones up the pelvic organs. Brain gets rich supply of blood.

Therapeutical: Good in treating Varicose Veins, Piles, Hernia, Faulty Thyroid ailments, Viscereptosis, Dyspepsia, Constipation and Menstrual disorders.

Spiritual: Memory develops, good for concentration and balance of mind.

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Catvāri (4) Keep the trunk and legs in a straight line by supporting the trunk on the shoulders. Keep the head on the floor.

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Cultural: Maintains healthy thyroid and thereby general health. Beneficially influences and tones up the pelvic organs. Brain gets rich supply of blood.

Therapeutical: Good in treating Varicose Veins, Piles, Hernia, Faulty Thyroid ailments, Viscereptosis, Dyspepsia, Constipation and Menstrual disorders.

Spiritual: Memory develops, good for concentration and balance of mind.

CAUTION Those with Hypertension, Lumbago, Slip-disc and Cervical Spondylosis should avoid.

SUBTLE POINTS

Mode of bending:

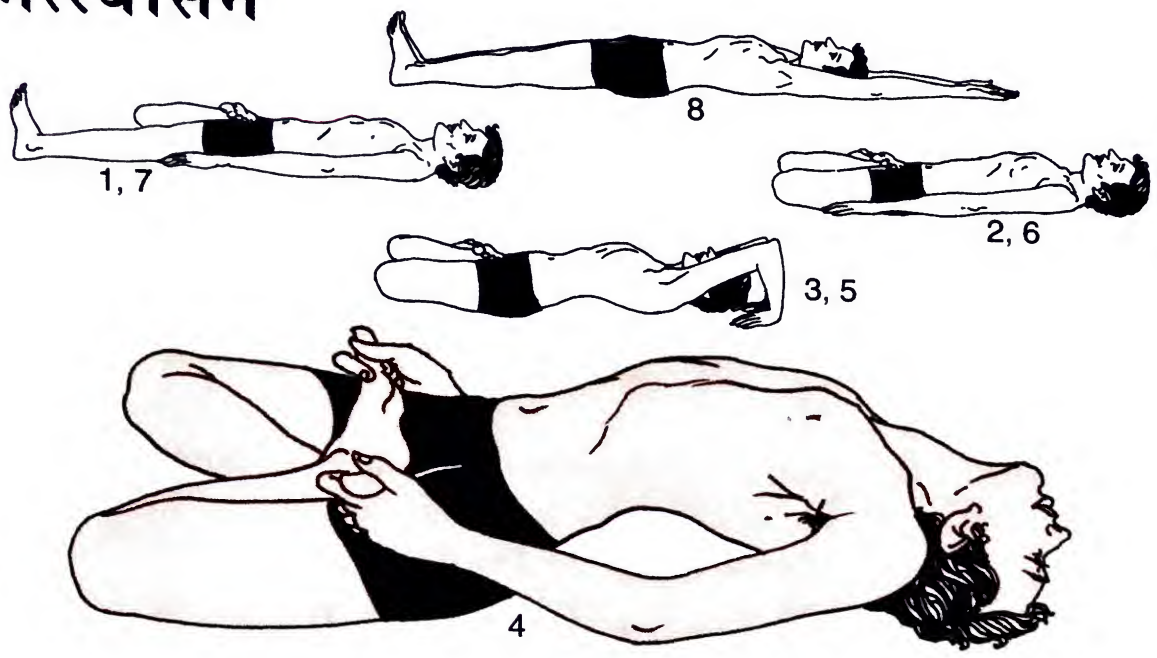
In the position No.01 knees should not be bent and in position No.03, without lifting the head, take the support on the arms and the elbows. Do not stretch the ankles in the final position.

Mode of breathing :

Breathe out whenever you bend downwards and inhale while coming up. Normal breathing in the final position.

MATSYĀSANA - *Fish Posture*

मत्स्यासन



Matsya means fish. In the final position of the posture body looks like a fish. Those who master this posture can float for a long time in water like a fish.

STHITI: Lie down on the supine keeping the legs together and hands above the head region i.e., from toes to head the entire body in a straight line.

Ekam (1)	Bend the right leg and keep the right foot on the left thigh.
Dve (2)	Bend the left leg then keep the left foot on the right thigh; thus assuming Padmāsana.
Trīṇi (3)	Place the palms on the floor above the shoulders, on either side of the head, fingers pointing to the shoulders.
Catvāri (4)	Then press the palms on the floor, lift the head neck and back off the floor. Keep the centre of the crown of the head on the floor by bending the dorsal and cervical spine backwards. Remove the hands and hook the big toes with the index fingers.
Panca (5)	Release the palms then place them on the floor above the shoulders i.e., position No.3.
Ṣaṭa (6)	Press the palms and remove the centre of the crown of the head on the floor, then keep it properly on the floor.
Sapta (7)	Unfold the left leg.
Aṣṭa (8)	Unfold the right leg; come back to the sthiti.

BENEFITS

Cultural	:	Being complementary to Sarvāṅgāsana it enhances all the benefits of it. Refreshes after a heavy deskwork.
Therapeutical	:	Very good for diabetes, asthma and people threatened with other lung diseases.
Spiritual	:	Body and mind become very light, agile, fresh and relaxed.
CAUTION	:	Patients of hypertension and cervical spondilitis should avoid.

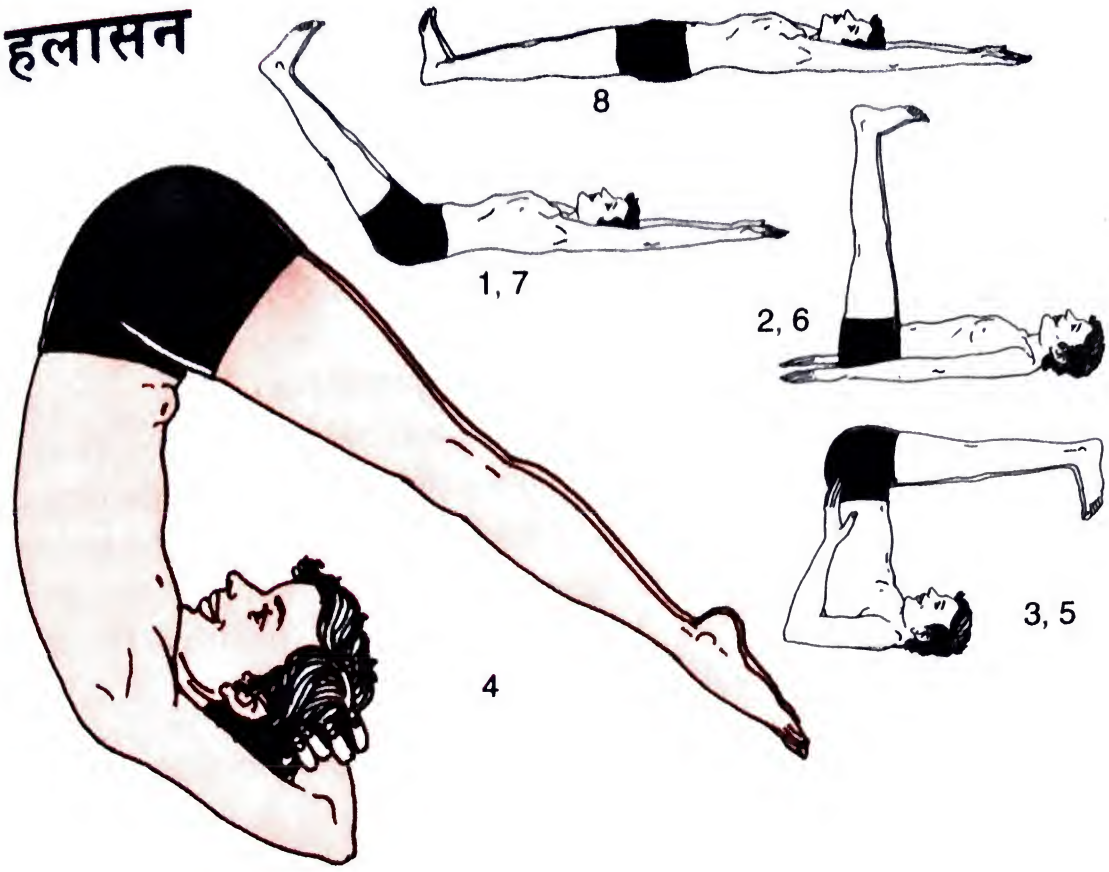
SUBTLE POINTS *Mode of bending:*

Take the weight of the body on the elbows and not on the neck/back.

Mode of breathing:

Breathe out whenever you bend downwards and inhale while coming up. Normal breathing in the final position.

HALĀSANA - *Plough Posture*



Hala means plough. In the final position of the posture, the body looks like a plough.

STHITI: Lie down in the supine position keeping the legs together and stretch the hands straight above the head region i.e. from toes to head, the entire body in a straight line.

Ekam (1) Raise both the legs together up to 45 degrees from the ground.

Dve (2) Further raise the legs up to 90 degrees and place the hands by the side of the body.

Trīṇi (3) Raise further the buttocks and the trunk taking the support of the arms and the elbows by

	firmly placing the elbows on the ground and support the back with both the palms. Keep the legs parallel to the ground.
Catvāri (4)	Bend further and touch the toes on the floor above the head. Stretch the ankles.
Panca (5)	Return to position No.3
Ṣaṭa (6)	Return to position No. 2
Sapta (7)	Return to position No.1
Aṣṭa (8)	Return to Sthiti.

BENEFITS

Cultural:	The back muscles, vertebrae, and lumbar nerves are stretched and kept healthy. Flexes and stretches abdominal muscles. Neck region receives plenty of blood supply and the nerves are toned up, also blood supply to chest increases. Helps to maintain healthy Thyroid. Elasticity of spine increases.
Therapeutical:	Good for dyspepsia, constipation due to weak abdominal muscles.
Spiritual :	Activates, warms up, lightens the psycho-physiological system.
CAUTION	Jerks at all stages should be avoided. All the limitations of Pascimatānāsana apply to this also.

SUBTLE POINTS

Mode of bending:

Keep the knees straight in the final position.

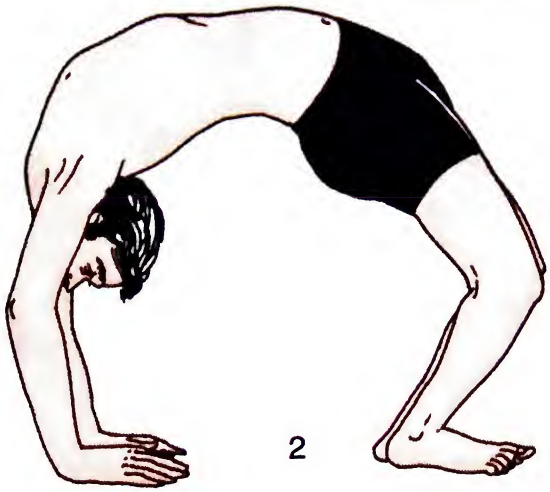
Mode of breathing :

Breathe out whenever you bend downwards and inhale while coming up. Normal breathing in the final position.

CAKRĀSANA - *Wheel Posture*

चक्रासन

4



2

1, 3

Cakra means wheel and Asana means posture. In the final position of the posture, the body resembles a wheel.

STHITI: Lie down on the supine keeping the legs together and stretching the hands straight above the head region i.e., from toes to head, the entire body in a straight line.

Ekam (1) Bend the knees and place the heels closest to the buttocks. Place your palms by the side of the respective ears by bending the elbows.

Dve (2) Lift the body up above the ground and balance on the palms and feet.

Trīṇi (3) Slowly return to position No.1.

Catvāri (4) Return to Sthiti.

BENEFITS

Cultural: Builds strong biceps, calves and a flexible back. Stimulates the nerves of the spine; one of the powerful back-bending postures.

Therapeutical: Clears the respiratory track.

Spiritual: A feeling of lightness and freshness is evoked.

CAUTION Limitations of Sarvāṇgāsana apply to this also.

SUBTLE POINTS

Mode of bending:

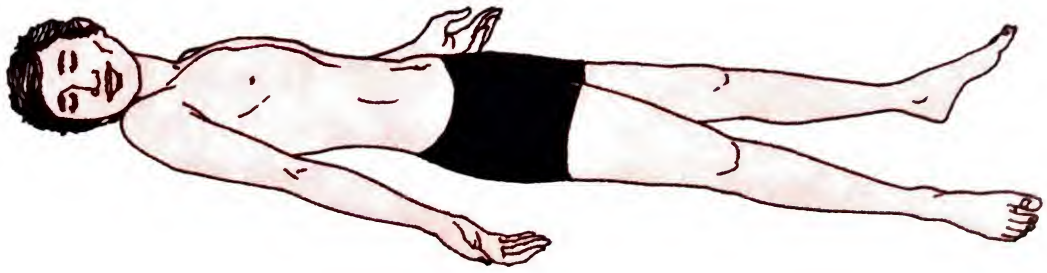
Arch the body maximum. Do not raise the heels off the ground.

Mode of breathing :

Breathe out whenever you bend downwards and inhale while coming up. Normal breathing in the final position.

ŚAVĀSANA - *The Corpse Pose*

शवासन



Sava means Corpse. The final position of the body resembles a corpse. This Āsana also signifies that one should be dead to all the external and internal stimulations without any response like a corpse.

STHITI: Lie down on the floor like a dead body. Spread your feet apart and hands apart from the body. Adjust the parts of the body in their most comfortable positions, which may differ for different practitioners. The aim of the practice of the Āsana is to systematically relax all the body parts and internal organs. In an advanced state of practice one can even the mental tensions and stresses. Further practice will lead to higher levels of concentration and

meditation. In the beginning learn to relax with the help of a guide.

BENEFITS

Cultural : It strengthens and tones up the entire system. All the muscles and joints get relaxed.

Therapeutical: Śavāsana is extremely useful in managing the psychosomatic ailments like Hypertension, Tension headaches etc.

Spiritual: Very useful in the practice of Antaraṇga Yoga and enhances the general wellbeing of a person.

Śavāsana can be practiced by all irrespective of age and physical status. Maintain slow, deep, relaxed, rhythmic and synchronised breathing throughout the practice. Śavāsana can also be practised in any comfortable position apart from lying down in the supine position.

CHAPTER 4

PRĀṆĀYĀMA

प्राणायाम

1 Sectional Breathing

This is a preparatory breathing practice for doing Prāṇāyāma. It chiefly corrects the breathing pattern and increases the vital capacity of the lungs. It has 3 sections :

(a) *Abdominal breathing or Diaphragmatic breathing (Adhama)*

Sit erect in Vajrāsana. Exhale. Inhale completely, slowly and continuously. This is called Pūraka. The abdomen is made to bulge continuously with the air entering especially into the lower sections of the lungs. Before exhaling stop the breath (Āntarya Kumbhaka) for a second. While exhaling (Recaka) the abdomen is drawn inwards continuously and slowly. Before the breath is reversed, stop the breath (Bāhya Kumbhaka) for a second and inhale. Repeat the breathing cycle. There should be no jerks in the whole process. It should be smooth, continuous and relaxing.

The diaphragm separating the thorax from the abdomen descends during inhalation with the bulging of the abdomen. This increases the air-flow into the lower sections of the lungs. The rhythmic movement of the diaphragm massages the contents of the abdomen gently, and helps the organs to function normally. It promotes the general circulation also.

(b) Thoracic (Chest) breathing or intercostal breathing (Madhyama)

In this sectional breathing performed while sitting erect in Vajrāsana, inhalation and exhalation are performed by expanding and contracting the chest only. Air flows through both nostrils, slowly and continously. The abdomen is controlled to avoid its bulging.

The middle lobes are opened up fully by this type of breathing.

(c) Upper lobar breathing or clavicular breathing (Ādya)

Sit erect in Vajrāsana. Raise the collar bones while inhaling. Keep the abdominal muscles contracted. The air is forced into the uppermost regions of the lungs thus ventilating the upper lobes.

The sparingly used upper lobes of the lungs will be properly aerated by this breathing.

These three sectionalised breathings are also called 'Adhama'. 'Madhyama' and 'Ādya'. In complete Yogic breathing technique all the above three types will be combined. During inhalation, the Adhama, Madhyama and Ādya occur sequentially and during exhalation the same sequence namely abdominal, chest and clavicular breathings occur. The whole process should be relaxing and comfortable, without any tension in the face.

Four Mudrās are generally associated with these sectional breathings. They are Cin Mudrā for Adhama, Cinmaya Mudrā for Madhyama, Ādi Mudrā for Ādya and Brahma Mudrā for complete Yogic breathing.

2 **BHASTRIKĀ PRĀṆĀYĀMA भस्त्रिका प्राणायाम**

* Sit comfortably in an erect spine position.

* Perform deep and long inhalations and exhalations continuously.

* During the practice emphasize more on the thorax activity.

* The speed of breathing is 120 strokes as in Kapālabhāti.

* After 10-15 strokes halt the practice and enjoy the Kevala Kumbhaka (automatic suspension of breathing) by being silent. Continue after a minute. Repeat 3 rounds.

BENEFITS :

Increases the blood circulation in the body. Very good for chronic cold, nasal allergies and various respiratory ailments, Supplements the benefits of Kapālabhāti.

Persons suffering from epilepsy and hypertension should avoid this practice.

* The flapping of the abdomen resembles the blacksmith's bellows and hence it is Bhastrikā.

3. **ANULOMA-VILOMA अनुलोम विलोम**
(Simple Inhalation - Exhalation Prāṇāyāma)

* Sit erect in Padmāsana or Vajrāsana (any meditative posture) with head, trunk and buttocks in a straight line. Close your eyes and exhale completely.

* Inhale through both the nostrils slowly and steadily without making any sound.

* Exhale slowly, continuously and silently.

* Have inhalation and exhalation for the same duration (say 20 secs each). During exhalation the chest goes down and the abdomen is taken in. Both the chest and the abdomen expand during inhalation; rhythmic breathing.

* There is no holding of the breath (Kumbhaka). Mental recitation of ॐ 'AUM' can be followed during inhalation as well as exhalation. It is good to practise this at dawn and sunset (though not mandatory), in empty stomach.

* One can have about 10 to 15 rounds to start with, and can go up to 30 rounds. One inhalation and one exhalation means one round. One must practice Anuloma – Viloma for at least 3 months continously to perceive the benefits.

* The whole practice is to be done in a very relaxed way, with least exhaustion.

BENEFITS :

Lungs, heart and stomach get purified, rhythmic breathing is the result. Lung capacity also increases. Helps in curing the diseases pertaining to lungs. Heart-beat gets normalized.

We will now present the two types of Anuloma – Viloma.

4 CANDRĀNULOMA-VILOMA चन्द्रानुलोम-विलोम

* Here the inhalation and exhalation are through left nostril (Candra Nāḍī) only. Right nostril is kept closed all the time. All the other points in Anuloma-Viloma are applicable here also. Adopt Nāsika Mudrā.

5 SŪRYĀNULOMA-VILOMA सूर्यानुलोम-विलोम

* In this inhalation and exhalation are carried out through the right nostril (Sūrya Nāḍī) only, keeping the left nostril closed all the time. All points in Anuloma-Viloma are applicable.

6 SŪRYA BHEDANA सूर्य भेदन

* Sit comfortably in an erect spine position.

* Inhale through the right nostril by closing the left nostril.

* Exhale through the left nostril by closing the right nostril.

* Inhalations and exhalations should be as slow, deep and as long as possible.

* Repeat the same as above for 10 rounds.

7 CANDRA BHEDANA चन्द्र भेदन

* Sit comfortably in an erect spine position.

* Inhale through the left nostril by closing the right nostril.

* Exhale through the right nostril by closing the left nostril.

* Inhalations and exhalations should be as slow, deep and as long as possible.

* Repeat the same as above for 10 rounds.

BENEFITS :

This helps in curing chronic cold, cough, sinusitis and tension headaches. Also increases the digestive fire.

8. NĀḌĪ ŚUDDHI - नाडी शुद्धि (PURIFICATION OF SUBTLE PERCEPTION PATHS)

* The Nāḍī Śuddhi is similar to Anuloma-Viloma, with the difference that inhalation and exhalation are done through alternate nostrils.

* Sit erect in Padmāsana (or any other meditative posture). Exhale completely.

* Close the right nostril with the thumb of the right hand. Inhale slowly, steadily and deeply as long as possible. Follow the entire course of the breath by feeling the movement of air. Do not hold the breath inside.

* Release the right and close the left nostril with the little and ring fingers of the right hand, and breathe out through the right nostril. Again breathe in through the right nostril and then breathe out through the left nostril. This forms

one round of Nāḍī Śuddhi.

* Inhalation and exhalation from each side should be of the same duration. (In the beginning the duration may be unequal).

* ॐ 'AUM' can be mentally recited during inhalation and exhalation.

* To start with, one can have nine rounds and this can gradually be increased to about 25 or 30 rounds.

* Early morning and late evening are good for this practice.

BENEFITS : Anuloma-Viloma and the Nāḍī Śuddhi are the foundations for the practice of good Prāṇāyāma. One has to practise these for a duration of 3 to 6 months to accomplish the purification of the Nadis (72 lakhs) and Cakras (which exist in the subtle body, called Prāṇāmayā Kośa). The effect is described as follows :

'He achieves purification of Nāḍīs marked by distinct signs - lightness of body, brightness of eyes and increase in appetite.'

9 UJJĀYĪ - उज्जायी (HISSING PRĀṆĀYĀMA)

* Sit comfortably in any of the meditative postures with the spine erect.

* Start inhaling slowly through both nostrils. The incoming air should be felt at the upper palate. By partially closing the glottis, a sibilant (s) sound is produced in the throat.

* While making a swallowing movement, bend the neck forward and allow the breath to stop automatically and effortlessly.

* While maintaining, relax the head region and feel the locking of air below the throat. Exhale slowly through left nostril and continuously making a

hissing noise at the throat by partial contraction of the glottis.

* This completes one cycle. Repeat 9 rounds.

* In other types of Ujjāyī, single nostril inhalation and exhalation are used. The airway resistance at the palate is the important aspect of this Prāṇāyāma. It helps to reduce the speed of breathing.

10. SĪTKĀRĪ - सीत्कारी (FOLDED-UP-TONGUE PRĀṆĀYĀMA)

* Sit in a comfortable posture, with an erect spine. Exhale from both nostrils.

* Fold the tongue backwards and press the tip of the tongue by the hard palate, leaving narrow openings on either side of the tongue. Inhale through these side-openings making a hissing sound.

* Allow the breath to be stopped with ease.

* Exhale slowly and continuously through both the nostrils.

* Then allow the breath to stop with ease and release. Repeat.

11 ŚITALĪ - शीतली (BEAK TONGUE PRĀṆĀYĀMA)

* Fold up the sides of the partially protruded tongue so as to form a long narrow tube resembling the beak of a bird. The passage is further narrowed by pressing the lips round the tongue. Inhale, making a hissing noise and perceive the cooling effect of the air as it passes through the tongue.

* Allow the breath to be stopped effortlessly. Exhale through both nostrils.

* Then allow the breath to be held comfortably before the next inhalation. Repeat the cycle.

12 **SADANTA - सदन्त (SUCK-THROUGH-TEETH-PRĀṆĀYĀMA)**

* Press the upper teeth on the lower ones.
* Suck in air through the crevices of the teeth slowly and continuously.
* Allow the breath to stop automatically. Exhale through both nostrils.
* Hold the breath comfortably for a while before the next inhalation. Repeat the cycle.

BENEFITS : All the above three - Śītkārī, Śītali and Sadanta have the same benefits. They are cooling Prāṇāyāmas. Because of their cooling effect, they help in calming down the mind by removing the mental anxiety and tension. They increase the resistance to diseases of respiratory system. Sadanta is particularly useful for persons suffering from pyorrhoea and hypersensitivity of gums.

13 **BHRĀMARĪ - भ्रामरी (BEETLE-SOUNDING PRĀṆĀYĀMA)**

* Sit erect in Padmāsana. Breathe in through both nostrils in such a way that a fine sound like the one produced by a male beetle is heard. Allow the breath to stop effortlessly. Slowly exhale while producing a sound from the mouth and nose, so as to produce a sweet musical humming sound like a female beetle. Hold the breath. Slowly release. Repeat the cycle several times. It is said about Bhrāmarī as follows :
* ''By the Yoga, which consists in practising thus, there arises an indescribable bliss in the hearts of the best among Yogins'' (Haṭha Pradīpika).

CHAPTER 5

BANDHAS AND MUDRĀS (बन्ध एवं मुद्रा)

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapters we have presented a few of the Āsanas and Prāṇāyāmas along with other preparatory practices. Now we move on to Bandhas and Mudrās. They are neuro-muscular locks and gestures. Bandhas are safety locks used during the process of breath-holding - Kumbhaka. These Bandhas and Mudrās are advanced techniques in Haṭha Yoga used mainly for culturing of emotions. They also help the aspirants to still the mind.

TYPES OF BANDHAS

1. *Uḍḍīyāna Bandha* **उड्डीयान बन्ध** ***(Fly-up-lock)***

- 'Uḍ' 'Ḍi' in Sanskrit means to 'fly up'. Here it is said that for the Yogi who practises this regularly, his 'Prana' moves up through the subtle centres. The significance of Uḍḍīyāna is to restrain the breath and hence is called a Bandha or Lock.

- Exhale completely through the mouth; expand the chest by mock-inhalation movement sucking in the relaxed abdominal muscles so that they lie flat almost in touch with the back bone. This is practised at the end of Kumbhaka before the beginning of Recaka. This is also the first stage of the Nauli Kriyā. Maintain for some time and then inhale slowly.

2 JĀLANDHARA BANDHA जालन्धर बन्ध (Glottis-lock)

This is used for restraining the breath below the level of the glottis after inhalation in Āntarkumbhaka.

* Contract the throat, press the chin firmly against the chest at the jugular notch after inhaling. The breath is stopped at the throat. With gradual practice the pressure of air on the glottis will be released and the whole system will be relaxed, while the breath gets stopped near the throat.

3 MŪLA BANDHA मूल बन्ध (ANUS-LOCK)

* In Padmāsana, press the perineum with the left heel, keep the right heel above the genital organs and contract the anus.

These three Bandhas, Uḍḍīyāna, Jālandhara and Mūla Bandha form one group called Bandha Traya **बन्धत्रय** (The Lock Trinity). These Bandhas are used exclusively as locks during Kumbhaka i.e. to restrain and close the passage for the breath. Uḍḍīyāna Bandha is used in Bāhya Kumbhaka and Jālandhara Bandha during Āntarya Kumbhaka. Mūla Bandha can be done during Pūraka, Kumbhaka, Recaka and also in meditation and Japa. This Bandha prevents the building up of tension in the head.

TYPES OF MUDRĀS

* Mudrās in general are used mainly in three fields :

(a) Dance (to express the feelings and emotions through bodily gestures).

(b) Rituals (in performing certain worships), and

(c) Haṭha Yoga (to help in stabilising the mind).

We will limit ourselves to the region of Haṭha Yoga which includes Āsanas, Prāṇāyāma, Saṭ Kriyās, Bandhas and Mudrās. Many of the Yoga

texts take Bandhas and Mudras as a single unit.

According to Gheranḍa Samhitā, there are mainly 25 Mudras, whereas Haṭha Pradīpikā describes only 10 of these. Among them the following twelve are the most important ones :

1. Mahā Mudrā, 2. Mahā Bandha, 3. Mahā Vedha, 4. Yoga Mudrā, 5. Viparītakaraṇī, 6. Vajroli, 7. Śakticālanī, 8. Khecari Mudrā, 9. Yoni Mudrā, 10. Uḍḍīyāna Bandha, 11. Jālandhara Bandha and 12. Mūla Bandha.

Haṭhapradīpika describes 10 main Mudrās, excluding Yoga Mudrā and Yoni Mudrā, from the above mentioned list of 12 Mudrās. There are various minor Mudrās too, which are prevalent and practised by the Haṭha Yogis.

1 AŚVINI MUDRĀ अश्विनि मुद्रा (HORSE-ANUS GESTURE)

* Sit erect in Padmāsana. Exhale.
* Hold the breath and pull up the anus by contracting the sphincter; hold for about 10 seconds and inhale.
* Release the anus.
* Repeat this rhythmically about 10 to 30 times.

BENEFITS :

This Mudrā is useful in evoking the spiritual forces dormant in the lower centres. Useful for pregnant women, and in curing urinary and anal incontinence. Aśvini Mudrā done in Viparītakaraṇī posture is useful in treating piles and prolapse uterus.

2 ṢAṆMUKHĪ MUDRĀ षण्मुखी मुद्रा (SIX-FACED GESTURE)

* Sit erect in any meditative posture.

* Spread out the fingers of both hands over the face, and close the eyes, ears and nose tightly using the following fingers : Index fingers over the eyes, thumbs over the Tragus of the ears, middle fingers over the nostrils, ring the little fingers over the lips thus closing all the orifices in the face.

* Open alternate nostrils by releasing only the middle fingers, to carry on the breathing as in Nādī Śuddhi Prāṇāyāma.

* This is Ṣaṇmukhī Mudrā.

BENEFITS : This Mudra is very helpful in taking the mind to meditation. It cuts off all external stimuli coming from the four special senses i.e., vision, hearing, smell and taste. Hence the mind can easily dwell in meditation by following the fine internal sound of the breath along with a mantra. Useful in persons suffering from tension headaches.

3 YOGA MUDRĀ योग मुद्रा (Yoga Gesture)

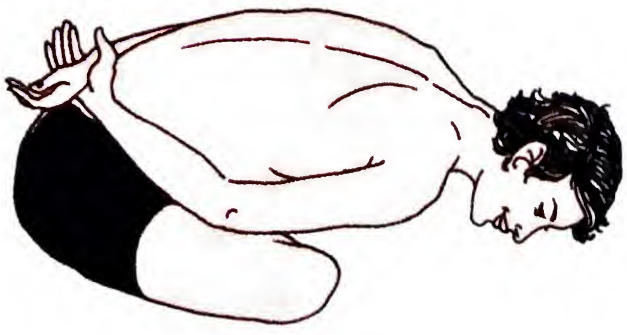
* Sit in Padmāsana, catch hold of the right wrist by left hand bending the back

* Bend forward and touch the floor by the forehead.

* Return.

* Yoga Mudrā can also be performed by putting the palms in between the heel and the abdominal wall, before bending forward.

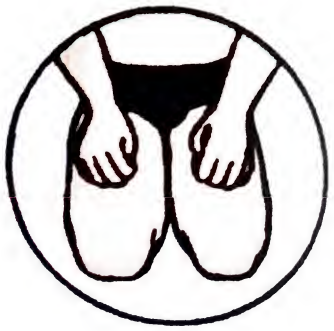
BENEFITS : This cures the diseases of the abdomen and pelvis, tones up the nervous system especially the lumbo-sacral nerves. Helps in cases of seminal weakness.



4 SOME MINOR MUDRAS

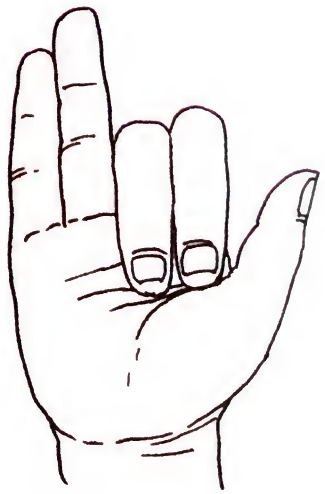
Cin Mudrā
चिन् मुद्रा

Cinmaya Mudrā
चिन्मय मुद्रा



Ādi Mudrā
आदि मुद्रा

Brahma Mudrā
ब्रह्म मुद्रा



Nāsikā Mudrā
नासिका मुदा

EPILOGUE

Presented in this book, are the principal Yogic practices - Kriyas, Āsanas, Prāṇāyāma, Bandhās and Mudrās. As preparatory to these, some general physical exercises and body cleansing techniques are also presented. All these are illustrated by line-drawings. The objective of this small book is to help a beginner to practise Yogāsanas, Prāṇāyāma etc. It does not elaborate the details. These practices when practised regularly will bring about a transformation of the whole personality to move towards perfection. These basic practices prepare an individual for advanced techniques like Meditation.

Some General Instruction for Practice of Yogāsanās

1. Do not perform Āsanas immediately after meals. Leave about 4 hours after a heavy meal and at least two hours after a light one. Avoid stimulating drinks.
2. Yogāsanas can be performed before or after bath, but allow about half-an-hour between Āsanas and bath.
3. Āsanas, and physical exercises should not be combined. After stretching and similar exercises, perform Śavāsana for a sufficient length of time before starting Āsanas.
4. Relaxing the body in a posture is of vital importance. Remove all tensions in the final posture. Relax for a few minutes in between the Āsanas.
5. After the Yogāsanas, one should feel fresh and relaxed; never tired, exhausted or sweating.
6. Do not over exert beyond your capacity to maintain the postures for long durations. Instead, adjust the timings according to your progress.
7. Daily practice is essential for fast progress.
8. Women should not practise Āsanas during menstrual period. One should stop practising Āsanas after the fifth month of pregnancy up to two or three months after the confinement except under expert guidance.

GENERAL SHORT COURSE
FOR HALF-AN HOUR DAILY PRACTICE

	Number	Duration in Minutes
Śithilīkaraṇa Vyāyāma		
Forward-Backward Bending	10 times	2
ĀSANAS		
Sūryanamaskār	3 times	3
Standing :		
1. Ardhakaṭi Cakrasana	(both sides)	2
2. Ardha Cakrāsana		½
3. Pāda Hastāsana		2
Sitting :		
1. Yoga Mudra or Śaśāṅkāsana		2
2. Uṣṭrāsana or Supta-Vajrāsana		½
3. Ardha Matsyendrāsana	(both sides)	2
Lying Posture :		
1. Bhujaṅgāsana		1
2. Sarvāṅgāsana		3
3. Matsyāsana		1
4. Śavāsana		4
PRANAYAMA		
1. Kapālabhāti	60 strokes	1
2. Nāḍī Śuddhi	9 rounds	2
Silence		2
Prayer		2
	Total	30

GENERAL COURSE
FOR ONE-HOUR DAILY PRACTICE

	Number	Duration in Minutes
Sithilīkarana Vyayama		
1. Jogging		3
2. Forward - Backward Bending	10 times	1
3. Twisting of the waist	10 times	1
4. Back-stretch or Tiger-stretch		1
Śavasāna		4
Agnisāra and Nauli		3
ĀSANAS		
Sūryanamaskāra	3 times	6
Standing :		
1. Ardhakaṭi Cakrāsana	(both sides)	1
2. Ardhacakrāsana		1
3. Pāda Hastasana		2
4. Parivṛtta Trikoṇāsana	(both sides)	2
Sitting :		
1. Pascimatānāsana		2
2. Supta Vajrāsana or Uṣṭrāsana		1
3. Yoga Mudrā or Śaśāṅkāsana		2
4. Ardhamatsyendrāsana	(both sides)	2
5. Makarāsana		4
Prone :		
1. Bhujaṅgāsana		1
2. Śalabhāsana or Dhanurāsana		1
Supine		
1. Sarvāngāsana or Viparītakaraṇi		2
2. Matsyāsana		1
3. Halāsana		2
4. Śavāsana		10
Pranayama		
1. Kapālabhāti	120 strokes	1
2. Naḍī Śuddhi	9 rounds	2
3. Omkar	3 times	2
Silence		2
	Total	60

About Vivekananda Kendra

Swami Vivekananda, with intense love in his heart for the motherland undertook wanderings all over India. He came to Kanyakumari and sat on 25th, 26th and 27th December 1892 on the mid-sea rock meditating on India's past, present and future.

It was on this Rock that he discovered the mission for glorious India and later shook the world by India's spirituality. On this sanctified place Mananeeya Sri Eknathji Ranade, with the participation of millions of people of India constructed the Vivekananda Rock Memorial, which symbolizes the glorious mission of India as seen by Swami Vivekananda in his meditation. Millions of people visit this monument at Kanyakumari and the three permanent Exhibitions - "Arise Awake", "The Wandering Monk" and "Gangotri" based on the Life and Message of Swami Vivekananda and Mananeeya Sri Eknathji get inspired to work for the nation.

Along with this Memorial, Sri Eknathji Ranade founded Vivekananda Kendra a "spiritually oriented service mission" to translate Swami Vivekananda's vision of glorious India into action. Vivekananda Kendra calls upon those youth to be the life-workers and dedicate their life in the service of the nation.

For actualising this vision, the Kendra has over 813 branch centres spread over 24 states of India to work for all sections of the society to rebuild the nation. To achieve this, Life-workers and the local workers of the Kendra, carry out various service activities through Yoga, Organizing Youth and Women, Rural Development, Education, Development of Natural Resources, and Publications based on the life and message of Swami Vivekananda. The Kendra urges all to join in this task of national regeneration.

Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this Divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship or psychic control, or philosophy-by one or more or all of these and be free.

Swami Vivekananda